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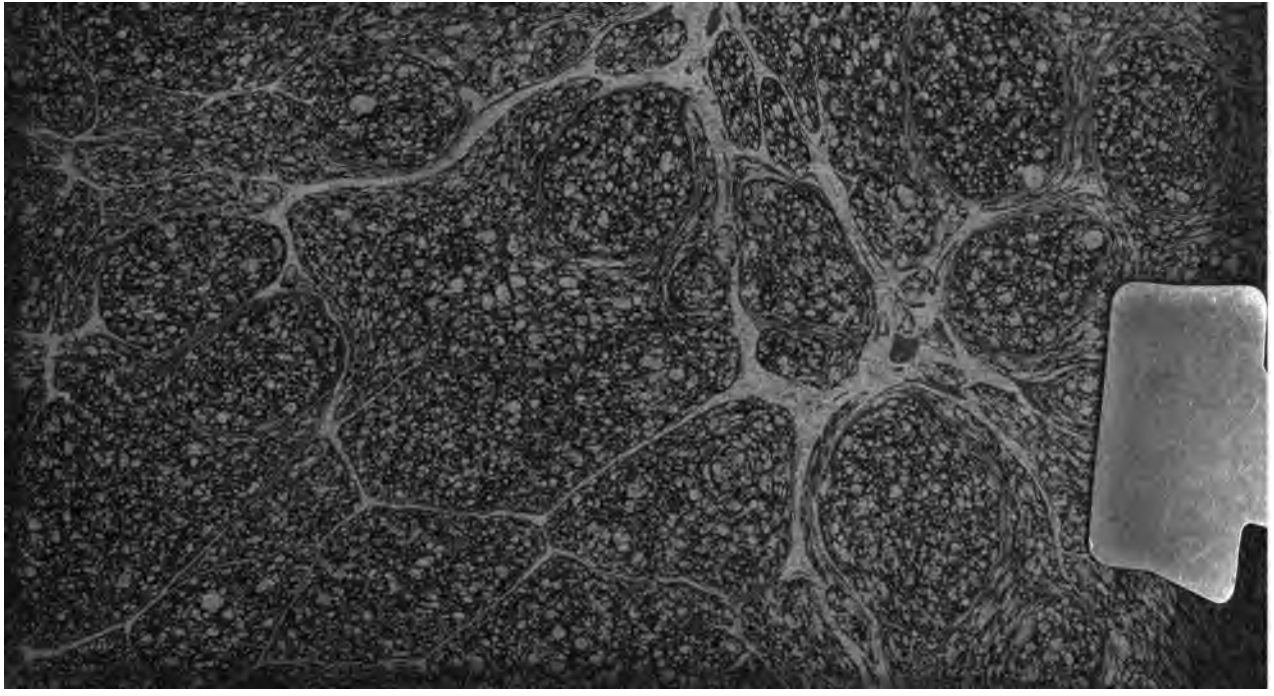

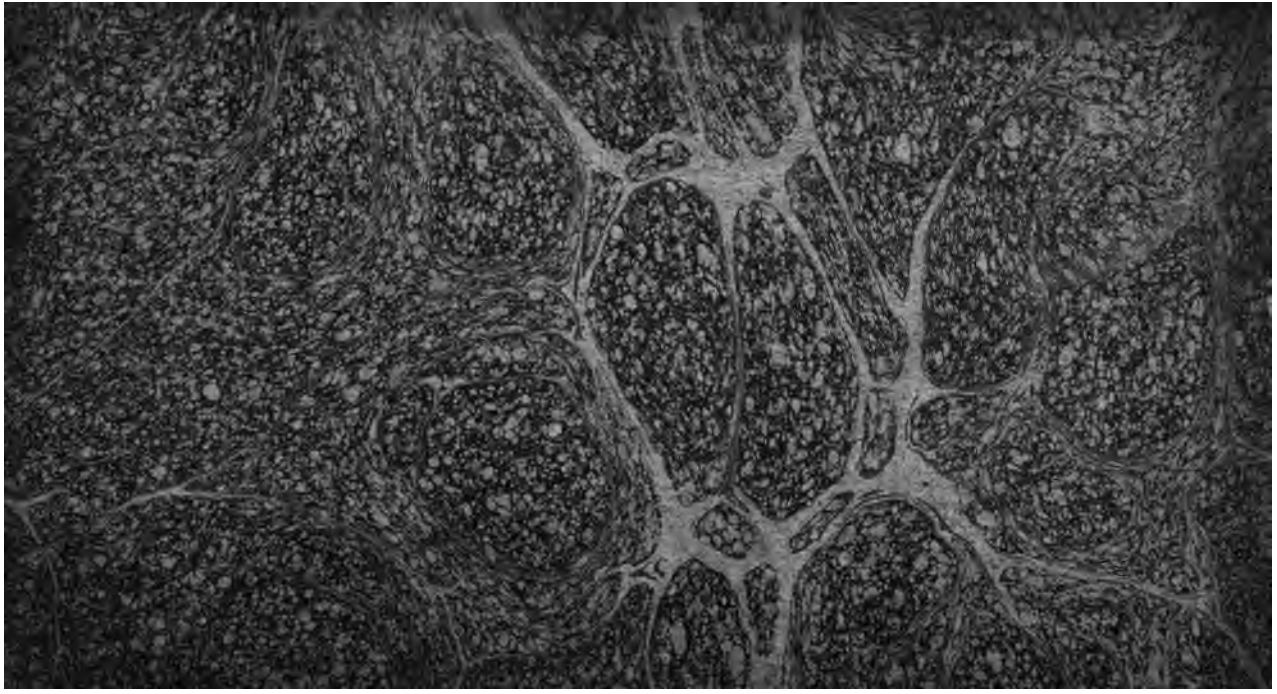

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DONALD MONTEITH.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

DONALD MONTEITH,

THE

HANDSOMEST MAN OF THE AGE

A Novel.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

By SELINA DAVENPORT,

AUTHOR OF

THE HYPOCRITE, OR THE MODERN JANUS; THE SONS OF THE VISCOUNT AND DAUGHTERS OF THE EARL, &c.

"Here are the pangs of wounded pride,
Of blasted hope, of wither'd joy:
The prop she lean'd on pierc'd her side,
The flame she fed burns to destroy.

In vain does Memory renew
The scenes once tinged in transport's dye;
The sad reverse soon starts to view,
And turns the past to agony.
Even conscious Virtue cannot cure
The pangs to every feeling due!"

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DONALD MONTEITH.

CHAPTER I.

NOTWITHSTANDING the apparent fortitude of Mrs. Chudleigh, she yet found herself considerably worse, after the departure of sir William; and the report of her physician only confirmed his fears, and gave veracity to his assertion. Every little interval of ease was, however, employed by the invalid in extolling to her guardian and lady Estifania the talents and virtues of her orphan friend.

She spoke of her own death as an event long wished for—"Yet," said she, "since

"since I have known Mary, I have wished to live a little longer for her sake. All the landed property I possess will go to the next heir, and the trifle in ready money which I have to bestow, is far short of what I had intended for my generous friend. The debility of my frame forbids all hope that it will last until the time when my remittances become due. I shall therefore quit this world with the semblance of ingratitude: yet the soul of Mary will acquit me; she, at least, will do justice to the sincerity of that affection, which, if it had the power, would render her independent for life."

"I doubt not but that she deserves it," replied lady Estifania Dorville; "she seems so good a girl, so modest, and yet so accomplished, that I think lord D'Eresby cannot do better than invite her to remain and be the companion of his daughter. It is true, she is very young, but my age will give countenance to her stay; and my niece has already attached herself so strongly to Miss Seymour, that it would

be almost a pity to rob her of her favourite."

The eyes of lord D'Eresby sparkled with secret exultation, at this wished-for proposal of her ladyship; while, with an indifference foreign to his real feelings, he seconded the opinion of his sister.

"I should quit this life without a sigh," continued Mrs. Chudleigh, "were I but assured of having procured a safe and honourable asylum for my beloved Mary; but I fear that the distance from town, and her consequent absence from her little nephew, and her maternal friend, will prove the bar to my hopes."

"We will send for them," cried his lordship; "nothing on our part shall be wanting to make the mind of Miss Seymour happy."

"Thank you, thank you, my dear guardian," replied Mrs. Chudleigh; "my heart is now relieved of part of its uneasiness on her account. Heaven will, I trust, reward

her for her tenderness towards a being such as I am."

As Mrs. Chudleigh was too enfeebled to bear a second removal from her chamber, lord D'Eresby had the harps carried into her sitting-room, that she might listen to the voice of her young friend, as often as she found herself able to bear the sound of the instruments.

Every thing that either Mary or Miss D'Eresby could devise, was done to amuse her mind, and lull the keenness of her bodily sufferings. The choicest flowers were daily gathered to shed their perfume over the couch of the invalid, whose grateful smile more than repaid the attention of the affectionate girls.

Between the intervals of her dreadful cough, one or other read passages from her favourite authors; yet the interruptions were so frequent, and her debility so deathlike, that she seemed to derive little pleasure from any thing, except the sound of Mary's harp, and Mary's voice.

In this situation, so agonizing to the feelings of those who loved her, she still continued to linger, attended by the friend she prized so dearly. No consideration had power to entice Mary from her presence, now that she believed all hope of recovery gone: she had heard from Mrs. Byron since the departure of sir William, and once from Agnes. Had she been less busily employed in watching the changes of Mrs. Chudleigh's features, the letter of Agnes would have affected her spirits most deeply; as it was, every thought of Mary was devoted to her dying Maria, and even the intelligence that it was rumoured that Monteith's regiment would be next sent on foreign service, and that his wife's health was seriously impaired by the bursting of a blood-vessel, had not power to make her forget for a moment what was due to the patient, the angelic Maria.

Notwithstanding her weakness, which brought on fainting fits when she was removed from her bed, Mrs. Chudleigh con-

tinued to be carried to the sofa, which was now placed near the fireside in her sleeping-room. Mary always assisted the nurse to support the light and skeleton form of the invalid to its place of repose, and to administer to her herself the little nourishment she was able to swallow.

After recovering one morning from a longer fainting fit than usual, she motioned for all to retire except Mary, who hung over her in breathless anxiety—"Dearest and best beloved friend," said she, in a low voice, "what trouble have I not occasioned you! my exhausted frame cannot support a recurrence of that terrible faintness. I would, if possible, prolong existence until I hear if William has been able to perform my wish of visiting the tomb of my sainted Ernest. Should this be denied me, tell him, my dear Mary, that I died, as I had lived, in perfect confidence of joining the pure spirits of his affianced wife and of my adored Chudleigh, and that my last prayer will be for his happiness, and for the restoration of yours. I

will not again press upon the subject I once named to you, Mary; but if the advice, the wishes, of one deeply, fondly interested in your welfare might have any influence, if the future establishment of your little idol will give additional force to my desires, do not refuse the heart of William, should it be at your disposal; were I not acquainted with his value, I should not be thus solicitous to give him to my dearest Mary."

Mary bent down to kiss the feverish cheek of Mrs. Chudleigh, and to assure her that, highly as she esteemed sir William, as well for his own merits as for his being so revered by her friend, yet the state of her feelings were such as to preclude the possibility of her doing the duties of a wife, to any other man than to him whom she had lost for ever.

"I cannot blame those feelings, Mary, though for your sake I may regret them. It is some consolation to me to know that you have secured to yourself, if not a husband, a steady, a disinterested friend. It

is the wish, Mary, of my guardian, and in particular of lady Estifania, that, if agreeable to yourself, you should remain with them, and be the friend and companion of the affectionate Violante. His lordship has proposed to me to send for Mrs. Byron and your little *nephew*, that their absence may be no obstacle to your continuing here. Perhaps, if I advise you to remain where you are already known and esteemed, you will be more inclined to adopt this last counsel, than that which concerned the peace of William; yet let me not mislead you, Mary, into a supposition that he has made me his confident; his eyes alone have betrayed to me his passion."

Mary felt too severely her approaching loss to enter into any thing which related to herself; yet she promised almost unconsciously to follow the last advice of Mrs. Chudleigh, who now feebly requested Mary to bring her writing-case. She then motioned for her pocket-book, out of which she took two bank-notes of fifty pounds, and giving them to Mary, said with dif-

ficulty, "You must not refuse this trifle for present use, my sister. Should you consent to the wishes of this worthy family, it will defray the expences of Mrs. Byron's journey. Take it, Mary, or you will, for the first time, offend."

Mary silently placed the notes in her purse, though she felt a wish that they had not been given. The disinterestedness of her attachment was startled by the present; she wanted no reward for having performed the duty of a friend.

"Now, dearest Mary, fetch your harp: I feel drowsy—charm me to sleep, by singing the last song that was sung to me by my beloved Ernest."

Mary willingly obeyed, but nature exhausted, refused to listen to the strains she loved; and Mary paused, lest, by a continuance of the sound, she might disturb the slumbers of her dear Maria. Scarce venturing to breathe, she seated herself on a stool by the side of the couch. She wished to write, but felt unable to with-

draw her eyes from the emaciated form before her.

Violante entered; Mary raised her finger to her lips; Miss D'Eresby stole softly to her side. An hour of painful watching elapsed: Mrs. Chudleigh awoke; a violent fit of coughing succeeded; Mary held her in her arms; her head rested on her bosom; Violante knelt before her; she held one hand, while Mary pressed the other with trembling tenderness.

Mrs. Chudleigh's dim eyes rested on the face she loved; she grasped convulsively the hand of her agitated friend; and heaving a sigh, breathed her last, as she had wished, in the arms of Mary.

A scream from Violante brought to her assistance the nurse and maid of Mrs. Chudleigh, who raised the senseless form of Mary from the body of her friend; and at the desire of Miss D'Eresby, conveyed it to her own chamber.

The polite yet tender attentions of lord D'Eresby, the friendly ones of lady Estifania Dorville, and the affectionate solici-

tude expressed by Violante to alleviate the deep distress of Mary, at length called upon her to make some exertion towards testifying her gratitude. The habitual stateliness of lady Estifania was laid aside: in the chamber of her niece, and in administering consolation to the afflicted favourite of Violante, her ladyship displayed a generous sense of feeling, which endeared her to Mary; and when in the drawing-room of lord D'Eresby, her *hauteur* was again assumed, Mary's heart was ever ready to find excuses for this blot in the character of her ladyship.

The mortal remains of Mrs. Chudleigh were, by her desire, conveyed to London, in order to be deposited in the same vault with those of her lamented sister. Every respect was paid to her memory by her guardian, who, with his family, went into mourning; while that put on by Mary was as deep as if she had lost a near relation. Deprived by death of a friend, rendered doubly dear by sickness and misfortune, and whose mind and heart were con-

genial with her own, Mary felt that it would be long before she should recover from the shock.

She had communicated to sir William and to Mrs. Byron the melancholy intelligence; and to the latter, she had also noticed the pressing invitation she had received to remain at D'Eresby House; but as this would entirely depend on whether Mrs. Byron consented to take the journey, Mary waited the reply of her adopted mother, before she yielded to the wishes of her new friends. She however inclosed one of the bank-notes for her use, beseeching her to accept it as the gift of *her daughter*.

When the will of Mrs. Chudleigh was opened, it was found that she had made lord Beaufort and sir William her executors. To lady Victoria she bequeathed her jewels, with the exception of a few ornaments to Mary, to whom she likewise left a legacy of a thousand pounds, as a small mark of grateful affection, and her picture, with a wish that her beloved

friend might occasionally wear it in remembrance of one who valued her as a sister.

This intelligence was made known to Mary by lord Beaufort, and accompanied by a letter of condolence from lady Victoria Volatile. The tears of Mary streamed afresh at this public testimony of her deceased friend's esteem, while lady Estifania counselled her to moderate her grief, assuring her that she rejoiced to learn that her generous friendship had met with a recompence, which, though inadequate to the wishes of Mrs. Chudleigh, still proved how deeply she felt her value. Her ladyship also promised, that if she would continue with them, every thing should be done to render her comfortable and happy. "It is not to be supposed, Miss Seymour," said her ladyship, "that an old woman like myself can supply to you the place of the friend you have lost; but you may rely upon my good offices: there are few people with whom I associate that I feel any degree of affection for, and still

fewer to whom I would acknowledge it if I did. You are among the number whose modest merit, unassuming talents, and sweetness of temper, call forth my esteem; I should therefore consider your removal as a loss to myself, and a serious disappointment to the hopes of my niece, as well as to lord D'Eresby, who seems perfectly disposed to admit you to share with Violante his paternal regard."

"You do me infinite honour," replied Mary, "in thus setting a value upon my humble abilities; the answer of my venerable protector will decide upon my movements. Should they authorize me to remain, I can only assure your ladyship that it will afford me the highest gratification to be enabled to prove my gratitude to yourself and lord D'Eresby, and to shew my affection for his daughter by rendering her every assistance and instruction in my power."

His lordship, who, during this conversation, had appeared lost in thought, now suddenly turned towards Mary, and taking

her hand, pressed it with rather more warmth than *paternal* regard—"Dearest Miss Seymour," he cried, "with what impatience shall I await the reply of your venerable friend, since on that depends the happiness of my Violante! You are the first object that has awakened the tenderness of her nature; she loves you warmly; if you leave her, you consign her to a solitude which I shall not have power to enliven, and the heart of my daughter will, for the first time, be tormented by wishes which neither my fortune nor my rank will enable me to gratify."

"Ah, dearest father!" exclaimed Violante, while the tear of friendship fell on the crimson blush of love, "ah, dearest father! how well you have defined my feelings! without Mary, all that riches can purchase will fail to make me happy."

Mary returned the embrace of Miss D'Eresby with affection and pleasure; but Mary was not then aware that in her features there dwelt a charm which increased the tenderness of her new friend. The

secret was betrayed to her in the following manner: the arrival of the post brought with it the bag of letters for D'Eresby House. His lordship franked the letters of Mary to Mrs. Byron, and hers were inclosed to him.

Violante ran out of breath to deliver to her favourite what would either confirm or annihilate all her hopes. Almost at the same instant the waiting-maid of Miss D'Eresby entered the apartment, and whispering in the ear of her mistress, gave to her a letter and retired.

Violante pressed the letter passionately to her lips; then, as if careless of the presence of Mary, broke the seal and eagerly devoured the contents. Again it received the same tender caress: placing it in her heaving bosom, she advanced towards Mary, whose quick eye had caught a glimpse of the handwriting of the letter, and throwing her arms round her neck, said—"Now, dear Mary, let me hear all I wish; tell me, does your adopted mother consent to your stay?"

"First tell *me*, dearest Violante, if the writer of that treasured letter, which has given so much rapture to your bosom, and so much tenderness to your eyes, is the production of a lover?"

"I will tell you every thing; I will even shew it you, my lovely Mary; but you must be secret, as my attachment is yet unknown to my father."

"Tell me but the name of your lover," said Mary, with increasing earnestness, "or I will keep you in suspense as to the decision of Mrs. Byron."

"The name of him I adore, of him for whom only I wish to live," exclaimed Violante with romantic fervor, "is George Fitzroy."

"I am satisfied," replied Mary, trembling with sensations which she could not well define; "I will not damp the bliss you now feel, my dear girl, by keeping you any longer in suspense: in the course of a couple of days, my worthy friend and my little darling nephew will leave Lon-

don. Oh, Violante! the sight of *them* will give joy to my soul, will restore me to life and——"

"Happiness, happiness!" cried Violante, hugging Mary in her arms; "dear, good Mrs. Byron; dear, sweet child! how I will love you! but I must run to apprise my father of the delightful news."

Away skipped Violante, with a heart that might be said to be bursting with too much felicity. Her stay was short: on the stairs she met lord D'Eresby, whose impatience to be acquainted with what concerned his repose, more than he chose at present to avow, made him leave the best part of his own letters unopened, to hasten to the apartments of his daughter.

Unchecked by the presence of his sister, his lordship expressed the delight he felt at Mary's continuing to reside under his roof, in terms highly animated; and though his polished sentences betrayed more ardour than the slender acquaintance with Mary justified, yet they excited no

suspicion in her guileless mind, while they only satisfied the vivid and romantic feelings of Violante.

Lord D'Eresby then desired his daughter to see that every thing was in readiness for the reception of Miss Seymour's little nephew, and his venerable friend; but, Mary, whose grateful heart felt deeply every attention paid to those she loved, though she thanked his lordship for the kindness of his wish, nevertheless declined to acquiesce in it, saying that Mrs. Byron had commissioned her to take lodgings near to the seaside; and that, much as she felt indebted for the proposed hospitality of his lordship, she knew that her old friend would prefer being where she could do as she pleased, without being checked by the fear of infringing on the rules of his lordship's family.

Lord D'Eresby forbore to press the subject: his point was gained, and he was happy. After advising Mary to send for his housekeeper, who in all probability would be able to procure a suitable resi-

dence for her worthy friend, he quitted the chamber to finish the inspection of his letters.

Violante was no sooner assured of her father's absence, than taking from her bosom the epistle of her lover, she read it to his sister, who, as she listened to the effusions of a passion which the beauty of Violante was well calculated to inspire, suffered a sigh inadvertently to escape her. It was the tribute of friendship due to the gentle, the tender Delia.

"Now that the secret of my soul is known to you, dear Mary," cried Miss D'Eresby, "let me tell you how I became acquainted with my handsome lover. Rather better than two years ago, my aunt Estifania was on a visit to my father; I had accompanied her one evening to her favourite walk, which is by the seaside; it was there that I first beheld my dear George: four eyes no sooner met, than we felt mutually interested for each other. A string of coral beads, which I wore round my neck, fortunately broke, as we were re-

passing him; he assisted me to recover them. Never shall I forget the look he gave me, or the thrill his touch occasioned as he pressed my hand with the last bead. Lady Estifania was cross at the accident, which detained her on the beach longer than she wished, and scolded me for my carelessness; I was obliged to hurry forward, but not without having first received a glance from my lover, which told me that I should be followed. Our carriage, however, was in waiting, and my heart died within me, as I thought it impossible that he should keep up with the speed of the horses. A week of painful torment succeeded: lady Estifania and my father had quitted us, and I became dull, out of humour, and unhappy. Poor Mrs. Vernon was then suffering under a complaint, which finally terminated the life of one of the best of women: unable to attend me as usual in my walks, I strolled alone through the gardens of my father; one object filled my mind, and occupied the whole of my attention; my

favourite walk was that which skirts the private road to the house; there I used to wander restless and uneasy, and strain my eyes to catch a glimpse of what my fancy sometimes pictured as a human figure. One morning I felt convinced that my imagination no longer deceived me; the person approached the low hedge of the shrubbery; his dress was that of a naval officer, his form, his features the same as those of the unknown. Surprise and rapture rooted me to the spot: he looked up, his eyes beamed with delight, he sprung over the hedge, and was at my feet, Mary, before I had power to fly."

"And would you have flown, Violante, had you possessed the power?" said Mary, looking archly in her face.

"Ah, that look! that enchanting look, Mary!" replied Violante, kissing her cheek gaily; "you are not aware, my lovely friend, of the occasional resemblance which exists between yourself and my handsome lover. But to my story; an hour passed in the society of George Fitzroy only ap-

peared a minute, and though my repeater warned me that it was time to return to the house, I still lingered to catch the sound of his musical voice, or the glance of his heavenly eyes, which told me that his heart was all my own. I agreed to meet him at the same spot next morning, before he would be persuaded to leave me; and for a fortnight I continued to enjoy the luxury of his conversation, which, to my romantic taste, possessed the double charm of being secret and unknown. The fondness of Mrs. Vernon might perhaps have led her to invite him to the house, as his family is honourable, and his manners decidedly those of a gentleman; but we preferred to meet in private, the tenderness of our hearts not admitting of the presence of a third person. Oh, Mary, my sweet friend, I really imagined that my soul was quitting me for ever, as I received the parting kiss of my adored George; I fainted in his arms, and when he recovered me, I wept upon his bosom, insensible to every thing but the agony I

endured at the prospect of losing him. Through the medium of my faithful Dinah, I have been able to correspond with him ever since his departure. Two long, tedious years have gone heavily by, since I saw my dearest George; but now he has authorized me to hope that I shall soon enjoy the bliss of seeing him."

The delight which would otherwise have filled the bosom of Mary, at the possibility of shortly beholding a brother whom she tenderly loved, was chilled by the remembrance of her altered state, her change of name, and the disgrace which a high-spirited young man like George might attach to that circumstance.

Violante, who did not observe the change of her countenance, continued to express the happiness she felt, and to hope that some opportunity would occur to enable her to enjoy the society of her lover, under the sanction of her father. "If I can once get George introduced to him," said she, "I have no fear but that he will succeed in gaining his lordship's

approbation of his passion; my father loves me too dearly to raise any objection to my choice, and as he suffered himself from the unjust authority of my grandfather, he will be solicitous to save me from a similar fate."

Violante now entered into a short detail of her mother's history, and as she knew that her father was engaged in his study, she conducted her friend into his bed-chamber, that she might shew her the picture esteemed by lord D'Eresby, as the most *valuable* in his collection. Mary could not restrain her admiration as she gazed on the exquisite countenance of donna Violante: beautiful as was that of her daughter, it yet wanted the chaste tenderness which heightened the attraction that belonged to her mother's.

"It is rather singular," said Violante, "that when my George was in Spain, some years back, he should not only have visited at the house of signor Bonelli, but actually have become deeply enamoured

of his youngest daughter, donna Isabella, whom, as he says, I strongly resemble. The saucy fellow thought to lessen my self-importance, by assuring me that it was on *her* account he loved me so passionately. I laughingly replied, that it was of little moment, as he had only made a transfer of his heart to her niece, my dear mother being the eldest of signor Bonelli's daughters."

"Heavens, how strange!" cried Mary, much astonished by what she had just heard; "some fatality seems to attend the disposal of your lover's affections; and are you really, Violante, perfectly assured that you prefer him to all you have hitherto seen?"

Violante seemed a little embarrassed, but soon recovering herself, replied, "You shall see lieutenant Fitzroy, Mary, and then judge of the stability of my love for him; you will not often meet with a handsomer man. But I have already taken up too much of your time; let us go and inquire of the housekeeper if she can as-

sist us to procure what you are anxious to obtain. When I see Mrs. Byron, I shall try and persuade her to take up her abode with my father."

The mind of Mary was soon made easy with respect to the future residence of her little idol, and her maternal friend: the person who had nursed Mrs. Chudleigh, and to whom Mary had made several presents, on account of her great attention to her lamented friend, waited upon her the next morning, to solicit her to come and look at the apartments she had to let. They were situated near the sea, and not more than two miles from D'Eresby House —a distance which was trifling to Mary, but which, as she wished, would prevent her beloved boy from being a too frequent guest at his lordship's.

The situation, as well as the accommodations, was such as she knew would please her old friend; she therefore requested that every thing might be got in readiness

to receive her, as she was expected in the course of a few days.

Lord D'Eresby, who silently watched all the movements of Mary's expressive face, and who could not help wondering at the excessive impatience she seemed to feel for the presence of an old woman and an infant nephew, proposed, in pity to her feelings, that she should take the carriage and meet the chaise, at the hour when it was most likely Mrs. Byron would arrive. Mary, however, had too much prudence to betray to strangers the tenderness of a mother. She preferred going to the lodgings, under pretence of seeing if all had been arranged to her wishes. This, fortunately, was approved of by lady Estifania, who very considerately said, that as Mary must have many things to hear, and to impart to her adopted parent, she had better remain with her all night, and that she would call for her herself the next day. Lord D'Eresby was not perfectly satisfied at this arrangement; yet as the proposal

came from his sister, and as it evidently gave the highest pleasure to Mary, he confined to himself his secret uneasiness.

CHAPTER II.

THOSE who know what it is to be a mother, and to have been separated for a time from an adored child, can judge of the rapture which once more filled the heart of Mary, as she pressed to her bosom her little boy. Her eyes eagerly ran over each blooming beauty; she kissed his rosy cheek and dimpled mouth with all a mother's extacy and pride, and as she hugged him close and closer to her breast, thought for the moment that every sorrow was light, now that she again embraced her child, who on his part testified his pleasure at being restored to the arms of his doting parent.

Mrs. Byron, to whose maternal kindness

Mary was indebted for the presence of her lovely cherub, next engrossed her attention; and Sophy, who had begged and prayed to accompany her aunt, was in her turn not forgotten by the most happy Mary.

Though greatly fatigued by the journey, Mrs. Byron had so much to say, and so many things to listen to, that it was morning before either Mary or herself thought of retiring to their bed-room. Even when there, her venerable friend could not refrain from imparting the variety of fears which she had experienced on her account since they had been separated. Mary had also to repeat the unexpected discovery she had made of Miss D'Eresby being the object of her brother's passion, as well as the many little acts of kindness which she had received from lord D'Eresby and lady Estifania Dorville; thus preparing the mind of her amiable old friend to receive with satisfaction their promised visit.

Could Mary have forgotten the scenes

of blissful tenderness she had once passed with Monteith—could she have eradicated from her memory all remembrance of the past, all dread of the future, she would now have been comparatively happy. Her little darling daily blest her sight, and had his mother permitted him, would have been a constant visitor at lord D'Eresby's; but to the great vexation of Violante, Mary eternally contrived to frame some excuse for his absence. This, however, could not always be done without exciting suspicion; and when the boy *was* allowed to leave the protection of Mrs. Byron, he generally passed the night either with Violante or his mother.

The nervous solicitude which Mary felt that she betrayed at every movement of the infant Donald, the restlessness her features expressed if he persisted in going with Dinah to the housekeeper's room, and the agony she seemed to suffer if by chance he received a hurt, convinced lord D'Eresby that the boy was more nearly related to Mary than she had acknow-

ledged. Yet this idea, far from abating the ardour of his secret passion, served only to increase it. Had she already been seduced to err, and this child the pledge of her imprudence, the task would be less difficult for him to perform: it was evident that either death or indifference had separated her from his father; the wealth of lord D'Eresby enabled him to provide most amply for both mother and son, and his inclinations kept pace with his power.

Notwithstanding this belief, so fatal to the safety of Mary, his lordship, passionately as he admired her, had never yet ventured to step beyond the bounds of delicacy in his conduct towards her. His passions had frequently urged him to snatch a kiss from her lips, at the same time as he bestowed one on Violante; but there was a sanctity about the person of Mary, lovely as it was, that awed the libertine wish of his lordship, and even at moments made him doubt whether such seeming innocence as hers could ever have yielded to unlawful passion.

Beauty, grace, and talents, such as Mary possessed, would have been alone sufficient to create enemies, among those whose narrow minds were envious of her superior attractions, and jealous of the evident favour in which she was held by lord D'Eresby and his daughter. This latter cause of dislike was most sensibly felt by one family in particular, who were occasionally invited to the dinner-table of his lordship, more as a matter of form than regard. His visitors generally consisted of gentlemen, chiefly officers; at these parties neither lady Estifania nor her young companions were present, except when the wife and daughters of sir Archibald Macfarlane were of the company.

The fortune of baron D'Eresby, which enabled him to live in a style of almost princely magnificence, as well as his being considered the handsomest man in Devonshire, made him an object of general attraction among the women; and sir Archibald and his wife were weak enough to believe,

from some attentions which he had paid to their eldest daughter, that his lordship intended to make her the enviable mistress of all his riches, as well as of himself. An evening passed in the society of Mary damped the joyous hopes of the self-deluded parents; they saw that even the stately lady Estifania Dorville relaxed a little from her *hauteur* when she was addressing Mary; they saw that Violante loved her beyond every thing except her father; and that his lordship's feelings were in perfect unison with those of his daughter.

The consequence was obvious; sir Archibald, his lady, and Miss Macfarlane, all cordially hated the beautiful intruder; and though they dissembled their real sentiments when at D'Eresby House, they indemnified themselves by throwing out the most illiberal insinuations against her as often as any opportunity occurred.

They had unfortunately discovered that the child whom they saw one morning in the arms of Violante was the reputed ne-

phew of their hated rival; nothing more was wanting to aid their malevolent designs. Forgetting that their own children were females, and therefore not exempt from censure, they scrupled not to whisper among their acquaintance that it was more than probable that Miss Seymour had a stronger claim than that of *aunt* to the care of the boy, as it was very unlikely that any person should bequeath to so young and unprotected a woman the charge of an infant child. The world, at least that part of it that came within the knowledge of the Macfarlanes, readily gave credit to their artful malice; and Mary was consequently believed by all their friends to be the *mother*, not the *aunt* of Donald.

Mary, unconscious of their hatred, and ignorant of its slanderous effects, continued to visit daily the residence of her adopted parent. She was accompanied occasionally by Miss D'Eresby and lady Estifania; at other times she enjoyed the luxury of going there alone, and of pouring forth

unrestrained all the fondness of her soul over the baby boy, whose growing beauties made him a fit subject for the painter's skill, and whose cherub form promised to equal the manly symmetry of his father's.

One morning, when Violante and Mary were preparing to pass an hour or two with Mrs. Byron, and had just gained the entrance of the marble hall, they were detained by the unexpected arrival of sir William Beaufort, whose return had been delayed beyond the time he had mentioned, and who was now accompanied by a young man of prepossessing appearance, the paleness of whose features seemed to be occasioned by a wound which he had received in the sword arm, and which he carried in a sling. At the sight of Violante the blood rushed into his cheeks, while hers seemed to recede, and an universal tremor shook her frame as the stranger hurried forward to kiss her hand. Sir William took that of Mary.

The sainted form of the dead Maria at

the same instant appeared to occupy their minds; tears started into the eyes of Mary, while those of sir William could not withhold the tribute of affection due to her memory. They returned to the drawing-room, where Mary learnt that the name of the young officer was Edgar Mordaunt, and judged from the pleasure which lord D'Eresby manifested at his return, that he was not only well known to the family, but highly esteemed by his lordship, who insisted upon his sending for his baggage, and residing with him during his stay in Devonshire. The young man consented with evident satisfaction; yet his eyes expressed a solicitude so tender, an anxiety so bordering on restlessness whenever they turned on Violante, who sat silent and embarrassed, that Mary felt her curiosity excited to know more of him.

"Do you not mean, Miss Seymour, to pay your visit to Mrs. Byron this morning?" inquired lady Estifania Dorville.

"Mrs. Byron!" exclaimed sir William, with a look and voice of surprise that made

Mary feel uncomfortable, though she knew not why.

"We have got that excellent creature among us," continued lady Estifania; "it is to her presence that we are indebted for that of her adopted daughter."

"May I accompany you, Miss Seymour?" said sir William.

Mary could not refuse. Violante rose also, as if glad of a pretext to leave the room.

"You will not run away from an old acquaintance, my Violante," cried her father, "but stay and entertain Mr. Mordaunt, as I am obliged to leave him for a short time. During my absence, make him as welcome as a brave man, and the son of a valued friend, ought to be."

Violante's confusion increased; so did the curiosity of Mary, who now suffered sir William to place her hand on his arm, as he conducted her to the lodgings of Mrs. Byron. During their walk, he appeared thoughtful and uneasy, yet as their conversation was concerning Mrs. Chud-

leigh, Mary attributed the seriousness of his manners to the melancholy of the subject. He once inquired by whose advice she had been induced to send for Mrs. Byron and her little nephew?

Mary innocently replied, that her inducement was the wish of her lamented Maria, and of lord D'Eresby and his family, who, as well as Mrs. Chudleigh, had solicited her to remain as the friend and companion of Violante—"I could not comply with their request," said she, "unless my dear Mrs. Byron agreed to live here likewise; the goodness and liberality of my new friends would fain leave me nothing to wish for; they only regret that they cannot prevail upon Mrs. Byron to take up her residence entirely with them."

Sir William looked anxiously in her face—"And have you any thing now to wish for, Mary? I beg pardon, Miss Seymour I mean."

"Call me Mary, if you please," she replied; "it is less formal, and more like a brother."

"I will endeavour to be a brother to you in every respect," said sir William, gravely; "but are you aware, that in fulfilling the duties of that pleasing character, I shall be obliged to lay aside all semblance of flattery, and speak only the language of truth, which sometimes may give offence?"

"Never, never!" cried Mary, warmly; "from your lips, sir William, I shall only look for truth; and should any thing in my conduct strike you as imprudent, I shall expect that your politeness will not get the better of your sincerity, but that you will point out my faults, with the same candour as if I were indeed your sister."

Sir William pressed her hand, yet continued silent: they now came to the lodgings of Mrs. Byron, who received her new visitor with every demonstration of respect and friendship. Still the thoughtful expression of his countenance remained, notwithstanding that he felt pleased by the evident esteem of one who, in his mind,

was an object worthy of being the protector and adviser of the orphan Mary.

The little Donald, not intimidated by the serious cast of his features, quitted the arms of his mother to climb the knees of sir William, who found that the boy was become dearer to him, since Mary's kiss had warmed his blooming cheek.

"Are you not surprised, my dear sir," said Mrs. Byron, "to see *us* here?"

Sir William had folded the child to his bosom, and stolen from his pouting lips the soft kiss of his mother; his features had relaxed into a smile of tenderness, which vanished at the question of Mrs. Byron—"I am indeed," said he, placing the boy on the ground. "I think the length of the journey, and change of place, must, at your time of life, my dear madam, have been productive of great inconvenience."

"I thought not of that," replied Mrs. Byron; "had it been still greater, the interest of Mary, and her happiness, would have removed every selfish feeling. The

connexion she has now forme
much consequence to be r
and as it has every appearanc
permanent one, I should nc
happy myself had I not been a
near her."

Sir William made no reply,
quickly towards Mary, inquir
heard from his sister—"It i
roof that I should feel happy
placed," said he; "but not
Cringewell remains with her.
perhaps, circumstances may e
have my wish."

"I almost fear, sir William,"
"that you disapprove of my co
D'Eresby House; but my
Chudleigh strongly advised m
and indeed I have received so n
of regard from all the family, th
be ungrateful of me not to owr
so willingly."

"May you never have reaso
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to pity him."

arrival of a gentleman who came home with sir William; but if I may judge from her countenance, she would rather have fulfilled her promise."

"I hope, for the sake of Mr. Mordaunt's peace, that your judgment in this instance is erroneous," exclaimed sir William; "the wounds of Love will otherwise prove more fatal to his life than those of Mars. If Violante has not made you the confidant of his passion, the language of his eyes will too soon betray it."

The heart of Mary felt a cold chill at these words, while Mrs. Byron gave her a look that only increased her chagrin and vexation. The fondness of a sister made her anxious to hear from the mouth of Violante an explanation of this mystery, and she therefore made an excuse to shorten her visit. On her return, Violante followed her to her apartments; they were those occupied by Mrs. Chudleigh, and since allotted to Mary, at the request of Violante, who felt a repugnance to sleep in the chamber in which the amiable Maria

had breathed her last. But as Mary's mind was superior to such weakness, she accordingly took possession of the costly rooms of her friend, who remained in those next to Mary's.

"I know not why," said Miss D'Eresby, as she threw herself on a couch, "but these apartments always make me melancholy: those flowers are quite faded, Mary; we will have them removed for fresh ones. Heigh ho! I feel very strange; I wish my father had not prevented my going out this morning. I am sure it is the want of my accustomed walk that has thus affected me."

"Rather say, my dear Violante, that the ill health of an old friend, and his unexpected return, are the cause of your altered feelings."

"You are right, I believe, Mary; nothing certainly could be more unexpected than the sight of Mr. Mordaunt. Poor fellow! he looks so pale, and has suffered so severely since he joined the army, that it is impossible not to pity him."

"It would ill accord with the tenderness of your heart, my dear Violante, could you behold unmoved the ravages which sickness and war have made in the form and features of one who appears to be an amiable young man, and who betrayed emotions on seeing you that might have justified me in deeming him more of a lover than a friend."

"Your penetration has not misled you," replied Violante, colouring deeply; "three years ago, my father came down to pass a month, and brought with him the only son of sir Edgar Mordaunt. I was then little more than thirteen, and of course became highly delighted at finding that I was of sufficient importance to attract the notice of a handsome, manly youth, four years older than myself. The voice of a lover was new to me, the attentions of one filled me with rapture, and I then imagined that of all earthly beings, Edgar Mordaunt was most dear to me."

"Did your heart deceive you, Violante?"

"It did, my friend; for though the absence of Edgar at first made me miserable, yet I no sooner beheld George Fitzroy, than I found my error, as it convinced me that the world *did* contain a being more calculated to render me happy than my first lover. Yet from my soul I pity him, not only for his bodily sufferings, but because I fear that three years spent abroad has not effaced from his mind the hours he passed in my society."

"Poor fellow!" said Mary, feelingly; "and I pity him also: think, Violante, how severe his destiny. Escaped with life from the horrors of the battle, though rendered incapable of again raising his arm in the service of his country, with what ardour must he have returned to his native land, in hopes of finding *you* still faithful to your early passion! think how inexpressibly poignant must have been the emotions occasioned by the sight of your altered manner, by the sight of your indifference! Alas! my dear Violante, you

have insured to Mr. Mordaunt my sympathy at least."

"I wish I had not seen him, Mary; for though my affections belong to another, yet I cannot view his evident distress without feeling more interested in his fate than my passion for George authorizes me to do. I am certain that I shall not recover my spirits all the time that he remains, which, thank Heaven! will only be a week."

Mary was too fondly attached to her brother not to watch with anxiety every movement of his beloved; yet this did not prevent her from pitying the affliction of his rival. Even the voice and features of Violante assumed by degrees a softness doubly dangerous to the repose of the wounded soldier; yet Mary's tender heart could not condemn her friend for shedding the secret tear of commiseration.

Lord D'Eresby evidently suspected the attachment of Mr. Mordaunt, and half espoused his cause; he urged him to

shorten, as much as possible, his stay at Mordaunt Hall, and to return to the mild climate of Devonshire. But the young officer required a stronger inducement than the invitation of his lordship; he looked for it in the dark eyes of his daughter; he saw only there the glance of pity, not of encouraging love; and he hesitated to accept the kind offer of her father, until he had first thrown himself at the feet of Violante. Opportunity is seldom wanting to a lover. Mr. Mordaunt succeeded in gaining a private interview with Miss D'Eresby, the evening before his departure. The result was, an avowal on her part that the impression he had made on her heart when a child had been weakened by the idea that he had forgotten her, and finally effaced by another. But as this second passion was yet unknown to her father, she threw herself upon his generosity to keep it a secret.

The conduct of her first lover upon this fatal intelligence was at once noble and

tender: he pressed her hands passionately to his heart—"Adored Violante!" he cried, "may your second lover devote himself to your happiness with the same fidelity as your first! I will not even reproach you for accelerating my death: may you be as happy as I wish you to be! as it should have been the study of my life to render you! My presence shall no longer give you pain—my absence will restore you to composure."

Violante, affected to tears, besought him to live for the sake of his family, if not for her; assuring him, at the same time, that she should ever feel the liveliest interest in his fate.

Mr. Mordaunt, struck by the tender expression of her countenance, flung his left arm round her yielding form—"Farewell, Violante! farewell for ever!"

He drew her still closer to his bosom—"One kiss, Violante; deny not the request of a dying man."

He pressed his lips to hers: both trembled; the remembrance of past endear-

ments melted the wavering soul of Violante. Again she felt the impassioned kiss of her youthful admirer, who, warmed by the exquisite beauty of her person, which he still supported, and encouraged by the throbbings of her bosom, which beat against his own, was venturing to plead once more his faithful attachment, when the entrance of sir William Beaufort made Miss D'Eresby start from the arm of Edgar, who, on her flying out of the chamber, scrupled not to confide to the unwelcome intruder the cause of the tender scene he had just witnessed.

The advice of sir William decided the conduct of young Mordaunt, and he accepted next morning the invitation of lord D'Eresby, who repeated his desire that he would hasten his return; while Violante saw him depart with a blushing countenance and downcast look, that betrayed the wanderings of a mind at variance with itself.

The absence of Mr. Mordaunt soon re-

stored her to her usual gaiety. She however sedulously avoided his name in all her conversations with Mary, while to sir William she behaved with an attention so marked, a respect so pointed, that all were at a loss to guess the cause of the change but himself.

Another letter from George Fitzroy now announced the arrival of his ship at Plymouth, and expressed his impatience to behold his beloved Violante, who he intreated to meet him the same evening at the usual spot, or at any other place that she would appoint.

Miss D'Eresby hastened to the chamber of Mary, to whom she shewed the letter, and besought her advice upon the safest manner of procuring a secret interview with her lover. Mary's first emotion was that of joy at the return of her brother; but this soon vanished, as the painful idea crossed her mind, that her present concealment of name and situation in the family of his beloved might increase his displeasure, and add another

wound to that which his pride had already received.

To hide her relationship any longer from Violante was impossible; yet to own George as her brother, would be to confess that he was the father of little Donald, and to awaken the just suspicions of all who knew her, as to what could be the motive of her going by any name but her own. She therefore resolved to tell Violante that he was her cousin, and to request that she would inclose for her a note to inform him of her being at D'Eresby House.

The delight of Violante was unbounded at this discovery; she embraced Mary again and again, declaring that she had made her so happy. She could now see and converse with her lover without any fear of detection, as the cousin of Miss Seymour would always be a welcome guest at her father's table. She now retired to write her letter, leaving Mary to explain, as well as she was able, to her brother, the different circumstances which had happen-

ed within the last few months, and to inform him of her motives for taking her mother's maiden name, as well as her reason for wishing him to pass as her cousin. Mary concluded by remarking on the singularity of her being introduced to the notice of the family of his Violante, and of the easy access it would enable him to have to the presence of Miss D'Eresby.

When the letter of Violante reached the hands of George Fitzroy, he pressed it rapturously to his lips, then broke the seal, eager to read the effusions of a heart whose ardour was equal to his own. The note of his sister met his view; his cheek grew red. Surprise and brotherly affection overcame the feelings of a lover, and he tore open the little billet of Mary, before he had perused that of Violante. Scarcely believing it possible that his sister and his beloved could reside under the same roof, George hastily ran over the lines, which only afforded him fresh subject of vexation. Angrily he tore in pieces the communication, which, as he con-

ceived, only added to his dishonour; while the melting tenderness conveyed to him in the letter of Miss D'Eresby scarce had power to chase away the frown of vengeance and disappointed hope which lowered upon his brow.

The boat was waiting to row him to land—sullen and discontented he leapt into it. Dark and gloomy were his first feelings on treading once again the shore of his native country; and the consciousness of wounded pride, of insulted honour, more than the anticipated extasies of mutual love, occupied the mind of the noble sailor, as he bent his steps towards the splendid abode of baron D'Eresby.

The changeful features of Mary betrayed a secret uneasiness, which was seen immediately by sir William, as she joined the family in the dining-parlour. He saw that her eyes were frequently turned towards the door, with a look of anxious expectation, while those of Violante sparkled with delight and anticipated rapture. Glittering with jewels, and arrayed

in a dress which shewed to advantage the voluptuous beauty of her graceful form, Violante for a moment fascinated the senses of the grave sir William; yet he no sooner perceived the gaze of vulgar passion directed towards her uncovered charms, than the enchantment vanished, and Reason resumed her empire in his soul.

Mary's want of appetite was noticed more than once by lord D'Eresby, who had lately assumed a tenderness of manner whenever he addressed her, that alarmed the watchful friendship of sir William. He now selected for her the choicest fruit, and inquired how long she had been indisposed, in a voice which betrayed the interest he took in all that related to her welfare.

"Mary is not ill, my dear father," cried Violante, gaily; "she is only suffering a little from suspense; a cousin whom she has not seen for two or three years is now arrived, and Mary has been expecting him all the morning."

The eyes of sir William were instantly

turned on Mary's blushing face, while those of lord D'Eresby were fixed on the same object, but with a far different expression.

"I hope," said lady Estifania Dorville, "that Miss Seymour will soon be gratified by the sight of her cousin; I am happy to hear that she has so near a relation. Pray, my dear, let us have the honour of being introduced to him. Is he in a civil or military capacity?"

"He belongs to the navy," replied Mary, not venturing to raise her eyes from the table.

"The navy," cried sir William, in a tone of surprise; "if it is not impertinent, may I inquire to what ship he belongs?"

"He is first lieutenant on board the Heliodora," replied Mary, trying to assume a careless air.

"This is the first time I have been informed of your having a relation in the navy, Miss Seymour," said his lordship; "but you will oblige me exceedingly by

offering him every accommodation that my house affords."

Mary expressed her thanks for this new proof of lord D'Eresby's goodness, as she rose to follow lady Estifania and Violante to the drawing-room. The latter had just taken her harp, when a servant, in obedience to the request of Mary, came to tell her that he had conducted a gentleman to her sitting-room. The fingers of Violante refused to strike the chords, and a sigh of pleasure escaped her, as she saw her friend hasten to the apartment which contained her lover.

Trembling and sick with apprehension, Mary opened the door of her chamber. George was walking about in equal agitation—"My brother," cried Mary, and would have sunk at his feet, had he not rushed forward and caught her to his bosom. For a few moments both were silent: the tearful eyes of Mary at length were raised fearfully to those of her brother. "Do you forgive me, dearest

George, the pain, the uneasiness I have caused you?"

George pressed her still closer to his breast. The bright eyes of the gallant sailor were moistened with tears—"Forgive *you*, Mary! oh, my beloved sister! it is not *you* that have offended me; it is the base and cowardly deceiver of your confiding innocence that excites my indignation and my vengeance; not you, my sweet Mary. By Heavens! the blood of Monteith can alone wash out the disgrace of this womanly weakness, and the shame likewise of bringing a blush on the cheek of an English sailor. But how are you, Mary? you say that you have met with great friends; that all here love you. Bless them for it! and, my Violante, does not she love you dearly?"

"Yes, very dearly," replied Mary, trying to check her tears; "but more so now that she thinks you are my cousin."

"Ah, Mary! deep, deep in my heart is buried the sense of thy wrongs, but I will avenge them. This sword, stained with

the blood of my country's foes, shall yet grow red with that of thy betrayer. Cruel, inhuman villain, to look upon a face like thine, and yet consign it to the eternal tears of self-reproach."

"Oh cease, my beloved George, cease to tear open those wounds which time's slow hand has not yet closed. Cease to call down vengeance on the head of a man more unfortunate than guilty. Betrayed by his father, deceived into what he refused to acknowledge legal, surely he is more the object of my generous brother's pity than of his hatred: my sufferings have not exceeded those of Monteith."

"And do you love him still, Mary?" cried George, frowning angrily.

"Oh do not look thus sternly on me, dearest brother," replied Mary, in a voice of supplicating sweetness; "let us not damp the joy of our present meeting by any painful recollections. To save you as much as possible the shame of acknowledging me as a sister, I have mentioned you to lord D'Eresby as my cousin; as

such let me pass, and let my injuries and my disgrace be only known to ourselves."

George appeared affected.

"Compose yourself, I beseech you," continued Mary; "let not a look, a word, betray my secret or my name. Hark, some one approaches; it is my friend."

The voice of Violante was now heard in the gallery, singing gaily the following lines of a favourite song of her father's.

"Oh that kiss! that sweet, sweet kiss!
The kiss *he* gave at parting,
In pain and grief still brought relief,
And kept the tear from starting."

The countenance of George now brightened into the rapture of a lover. Violante appeared; he caught her in his arms; he pressed his lips to hers: the magic of her kiss, the languishing softness of her air, dispelled the storm of his bosom; and love, happy love, resumed his empire.

As soon as the transports of the lovers had a little subsided, Violante said, as she

disengaged herself from the arms of George—"I declare I had quite forgotten that my father sent me to request that you would favour him with your company. Come, dearest Mary, let us descend and introduce the *stranger* to his lordship."

Notwithstanding the efforts of Mary to appear unembarrassed, as she mentioned the name of her brother, her confusion, and the deep colour on her cheek, joined to the manly and elegant person of young Fitzroy, excited in the mind of lord D'Eresby an instantaneous fear that he was only a nominal cousin; probably the father of little Donald, returned to claim the woman, whom circumstances perhaps had obliged him to abandon. He nevertheless came forward with an air of graceful hospitality, and giving his hand to George, expressed himself highly gratified at this opportunity of testifying his regard to a relation of Miss Seymour, for whom not only himself, but his whole family, entertained the warmest affection.

At the name of Fitzroy the heart of sir

William beat with additional quickness—he must be the brother of Mary Fitzroy, of his little friend, whose angel form still hovered over his mind, still lived in his soul. Mary Seymour was her cousin—the resemblance between the two Marys was now accounted for; perhaps he should be able to gain the long wished-for intelligence respecting the fate of his first love.

It was, however, rather singular that Miss Seymour should never have mentioned this cousin before; and equally strange that their interview had paled the roses of her cheek, and dimmed the lustre of her dark blue eyes, while the carnation glowed more deeply on the face of Violante, and the fire of her black eyes was almost too dazzling to behold.

Alive only to the blissful presence of her lover, Miss D'Eresby frequently forgot that it was *supposed* that their acquaintance had only commenced that evening. Mary became alarmed lest she should betray herself, but her father and sir William were too much engaged in conversa-

tion with George, to observe the thoughtless vivacity of Violante.

The manners of young Fitzroy were too prepossessing not to gain the esteem both of lord D'Eresby and sir William Beaufort; the former gave him a general invitation to his house, and urged him to reside there entirely while he was ashore; but George politely declined the offer, as business of importance, he said, would call him in the course of a few days to London.

Mary turned faint, as the probable cause of his journey crossed her mind. She bent over the harp which she had just taken, and her thoughts wandered to scenes of past happiness. The voice of lord D'Eresby, who now approached, recalled them, while the tenderness of her brother's eyes, which rested on herself, gave birth to the hope that she might have the power still to soften his resentment; and she struck the chords, inspired by the desire of gratifying his fraternal vanity, and lulling each ungentle feeling to repose. Never had

Mary displayed her skill to such advantage as the present moment.

Lord D'Eresby hung over her enchanted; sir William felt equally the magic of her touch and voice, yet his thoughts were far different to those of his noble host. He watched with anxiety and suspicion the countenance of young Fitzroy, he saw it beaming with rapture as his eyes dwelt on the luxurious form of Violante; then soften into melancholy tenderness as he gazed on that of Mary. More and more perplexed, sir William remained lost in thought during the performance of Miss D'Eresby. Much as she had improved under the tuition of Mary, yet George could not help feeling the superiority of his sister over his beloved.

He rose to depart, unconscious of the various suspicions to which his presence had given birth; neither did he observe the instantaneous change in the features of lord D'Eresby, on his promising to call early the next morning, that he might accompany Mary on a visit to Mrs. Byron.

CHAPTER III.

"You see," said Mrs. Byron, holding out her hand to young Fitzroy, "that I have kept my word sacred, not to separate from Mary. Are you not pleased, my dear sir, to see her so advantageously situated as the friend of your Violanté?"

"My gratitude to you, dearest Mrs. Byron, is unbounded," replied George; "I shall ever esteem you as the guardian angel of my injured Mary, but my pride is wounded at the concealment of her name. Why should she feel ashamed to pass by her own? is *she* to blame that the villany of Monteith has robbed her of *that* which she conceived to be her right, and which none but a man destitute of the common principles of honour would ever have mocked her with?"

"Motives of delicacy, my dear young friend, induced your sister to shun as much as possible the voice of censure, and the gaze of observation. As Miss Seymour, she has done both."

"My God!" exclaimed George, "who could ever have supposed that there existed a heart so base as that of Monteith's? I should have thought that the orphan state of Mary, her unprotected beauty, her ready confidence in his integrity, was alone sufficient to have saved her from becoming the victim of his passions: but he shall find that she is not so destitute of friends, but that her brother's arm shall avenge her wrongs."

"Leave them to Heaven," replied Mrs. Byron, with solemnity, "nor seek to inflict fresh misery on my beloved child. Already has she been on the verge of the grave, while the sufferings of Monteith reduced him to the same state. Even now he wanders about, the ghost of what he was: the cruelty of his parent, the rigid laws of his country, have deprived him

of *all* that made his existence valuable: they have torn him from the woman he adores; they have robbed his son of his inheritance; they have murdered for ever the repose of his miserable father. Oh, my dear young friend! do not you add to the horror of the scene, by shedding the blood of one who, though guilty of one fault, is sufficiently punished by the eternal reproaches of his own conscience."

"Best of women!" cried George, "warmly as you advocate the cause of the betrayer, yet my own heart disavows the pleadings of yours. I see my sister, *once* the pride and glory of my soul, possessed of every requisite to render her an ornament to her family, now abandoned and dishonoured, ashamed to own her name, and trembling lest chance should discover who she is, and what she was. Oh, my full heart! can I, her brother, her only natural protector, sit tamely a spectator of her injuries, and not call to account the man who has thus blasted her fair prospects, ruined her spotless fame, and blight-

ed the laurels with which victory had crowned my name?"

Little Donald had been asleep during this conversation; he now awoke, and Mary, who had been watching his slumbers, pressed him fondly to her bosom. George was standing at the window, as she entered with the lovely boy in her arms. He turned hastily round at the voice of his nephew—"Whose child is this?" said he, advancing angrily towards his sister.

"It is mine, dearest brother," she replied, in trembling apprehension; "look in his angel face, my George; see, he smiles and holds out his little hands: will you not take him? can you refuse his innocent pleadings?"

George caught the child from the arms of his sister; tears filled his eyes as he bent over the boy. Ashamed of his weakness, he exclaimed, in a tone of reproach—"Mary, you have done wrong! who advised you to keep this infant? why is he

not with his father? has he the brutality to abandon his own offspring, to throw him upon the bounty of his helpless mother, and thus add insult to injury? speak, Mary, by whose advice have you retained the son of Monteith?"

"How could I part with him?" replied Mary, sobbing violently; "were you a parent, George, you would not demand such a sacrifice of a mother."

"And yet *his* father has deserted him, Mary," said her brother, looking with a softened expression of features in the face of the beautiful boy.

"I requested permission to retain him. Monteith sacrificed his own wishes to mine: could he give me a dearer proof of his love, his confidence?"

"Would to God that he had consulted your honour, Mary! then had he not sacrificed his own at the base shrine of selfish passion; and this sweet child would never have been born to curse the treachery of his father, and to lament the weak-

ness of his mother. Take him, Mary; the sight of him unmans me; I will see you in the evening."

George now gave the infant Donald to his weeping parent, and hastened out of the house, angry at having betrayed emotions which he thought inconsistent with his wounded pride. When alone he quickly recovered his fortitude, and with it his determination to seek immediately the author of his sister's misery and dishonour. Not even the magic glances of Violante had power to shake the purpose of his soul.

Half offended at his not yielding to her wishes, the mortified beauty bit her lips in silent vexation. Would *Edgar Mordaunt* have refused to gratify a desire of hers? would *he* have shewn such haste to quit her after so long an absence? Oh, no! his heart beat only for *her*; his time, nay, his life was devoted to her service. How unfortunate that the man whom she had preferred to him should be less her slave! She made Mary the confidant of her dis-

appointment, who expressed an equal solicitude for the delay of his journey; but neither the persuasion of Violante, nor the silent, yet eloquent looks of Mary, had power to alter the resolution of young Fitzroy: he allowed himself only three days to remain at Plymouth.

On the morning of the fourth, George called at D'Eresby House: after paying his respects to the family in the drawing-room, he went to the apartments of his sister, who, on his approach, hastily concealed in her writing-desk a letter which she had just received, while one from Delia lay open on the table—"Are you still bent on leaving us, my dear George?" said she, trying to force a smile; "how will you excuse yourself to Violante, who feels offended by your want of attention to her wishes? she expects from her lover a ready obedience to all her desires—nay, that he should sacrifice all personal considerations, if she required it."

"Indeed! and are such the conditions by which I am to retain the heart of Vio-

lante? enslaved by her beauty, I am willing to pay a just homage to her charms; but though I love her passionately, and would sacrifice my life in her service, yet I cannot devote to her the whole of my time: my first passion was quenched by the voice of honour; I burn with equal ardour for the beautiful niece of donna Isabella; but even Violante's tender claims must yield to those of honour. If, by my departure, I was sure to forfeit all right to her hand, yet, firm in the cause of injured virtue, even Violante's self I would resign, sooner than give up the hope of redressing your wrongs."

"Is it love for me, my brother, or your own wounded pride, that prompts you to increase, not redress my injuries?"

"Is it fear for a brother's life, or for that of your betrayer, Mary, that thus urges you to forget your own disgrace?"

He laid his hand on the table; his eyes glanced on the letter of Delia; he took it up, then replaced it.

"Read it, if you please," said Mary; "it comes from one who knows my sad story, and whose generous bosom sympathizes in my distress, and loves me the more for my misfortunes. Read it, George; my dear Delia is at present in great affliction. Lady Sarah is given over by her physicians, and continues to press my friend to bestow her hand on lord Bodmyn before she dies."

The cheek of George was paler than before; his hand trembled, as he hastily read over the affectionate but melancholy letter of his cousin—"Generous, noble girl!" he exclaimed, "you have not deceived the expectation I had formed of your character. Mary, she is worthy of your friendship."

"And of yours, my dear George."

"Certainly; Delia always possessed it; but now that she is known to my sister, now that she is more than half-inclined to marry lord Bodmyn, to secure to *you* a home, she has found the way to conquer a part of my hereditary pride. I must see

and thank her, for her kindness to one so dear to me."

"Lady Sarah has more than once, since her illness, expressed a wish to see you. Will you not forget her past behaviour, my dear George, and call on her ladyship? how delighted Delia will be to see once again the friend of her childhood!"

"It is to her my visit will be paid," replied young Fitzroy; "I should not feel satisfied with myself if I did not acknowledge personally my gratitude to Delia, for the affection she has shewn you in the hour of humiliation and disgrace. Write, Mary, and I will myself be the bearer of your letter."

"Oh, my beloved brother! after this tender proof of your regard, suffer me to plead for one whose tenderness for me was the sole cause of his swerving from the path of honour. Had he loved me less passionately, his reason would not have been blinded by the enthusiasm of his feelings; had I been less adored, he would

not have hazarded the imputation of selfishness."

"Mary, Mary, this fondness for your undoer stabs me to the soul, and almost makes me doubt whether Monteith is not become more dear to you since his desertion. Is he not at this moment living publicly as the husband of the woman he abandoned, and whose claim he at first denied? has he not burthened you with the care of his son? has he not robbed you of the power of openly acknowledging your child, lest the world should point at you as the cast-off mistress of the handsome Monteith, the poor girl whose vanity was probably the cause of her own ruin? has he not done this, and yet you love him still?"

Mary burst into tears; the reproachful words of her brother wounded her most deeply, and she covered with her handkerchief the burning blush of shame which suffused her cheek.

George could not behold her tears unmoved; he bent over her and kissed her

forehead—"Forgive me, Mary; I see I have severely distressed you: but you know my affection for you—you know my proud hopes, my fond expectations—you justified them all; yet how have they been disappointed! Forgive me, Mary, dearest Mary, forgive me!"

He flung his arms round the neck of his sister, and pressed his cheek to hers.

Violante entered; she started, turned pale, and sunk upon a couch near the door—"I beg pardon for this intrusion," said she, half crying with vexation and surprise; "but I did not expect to find Miss Seymour so particularly engaged."

"Dear Violante," replied Mary, rising and going towards her, "do not be offended with my cousin; I will explain every thing to your satisfaction."

"It is quite unnecessary, Miss Seymour. Mr. Fitzroy is at liberty to act as he thinks proper: after what I have just witnessed, he is certainly not accountable to *me* for his conduct. There are those in the world who would not have ventured

either to slight my weak partiality, or to mock me with idle protestations, while in reality their heart belonged to another. I am only pained that *you*, Mary, have deceived me."

"I have not deceived you, dearest Violante, and am ready to do away from your mind every ungenerous suspicion to which the tender situation in which you found us has given birth."

"Hold, Mary!" cried her brother; "Miss D'Eresby has condemned me unheard; she has threatened me with a rival; she has restored to me the liberty of acting as I please; your confidence is therefore unnecessary."

Violante expected not this shew of indifference; her pride was hurt by the coolness of her lover, and she resolved at least to mortify him as much as possible. The languishing tenderness of her eyes gave place to the fire of indignation. She rose from her seat, and curtseying with an air of dignity, said—"My condemnation, Mr. Fitzroy, has come most opportunely to li-

berate you from your vows: may you profit at least by my folly, and when you seek to amuse away an idle hour, I advise you to do it with more circumspection, as every woman may not be as willing to resign you as I am!"

Saying this, she hastily withdrew.

Mary immediately motioned to follow her—"I cannot bear that she should suspect me of deception. Dear George, let me go to her, she is only in the next room. I shall be miserable if you leave this house without being reconciled."

George appeared much disconcerted; he however allowed his sister to seek the angry beauty, while he walked up and down the chamber, vexed at what had happened, and offended at the conduct of Miss D'Eresby.

Mary found her dissolved in tears; she threw her arms round her graceful form, and kissing tenderly her cheek, besought her to listen to the voice of one who loved her too sincerely to give her a moment's pain—"As a proof of it, dear Violante, I

am willing to confide to you a secret of importance; only promise that you will never betray it, unless first authorized by me; it is a secret which will at once convince you of the innocence of my affection for George, and prove to you that you have done wrong in speaking with the warmth you did to him just now."

Violante, who really loved Mary most tenderly, raised her tearful eyes to the face of her friend, and promised whatever might be her communication to hold it sacred.

"Another time," said Mary, "I will inform you of what gave rise to the tears you saw me shed—tears of agony, occasioned by the conversation of my noble-spirited brother."

"Brother!" exclaimed Violante, in a tone of amazement; "is George Fitzroy indeed your brother? oh, let me hasten to ask his forgiveness—let me assure him of mine!"

She caught the hand of Mary, and eager to confess her error, hurried to the

presence of young Fitzroy, who no sooner beheld the beseeching looks of Violante, than taking her in his arms, he sealed on her beautiful lips the kiss of oblivion for the past, promising at the same time to delay his journey until the next day.

The glow of pleasure again illumined the countenance of Miss D'Eresby, while that of Mary remained pensive and dejected. She saw her brother rise to take leave, and followed him into the anti-chamber—"When may I expect your return?" said she, in a trembling voice.

"Perhaps in ten days," he replied, aiming at a gaiety of heart which he did not feel; "my penetration has this evening discovered a secret, Mary, of some importance to your happiness; but I will defer mentioning what it is until we meet again."

Mary sighed bitterly—"When we meet again, my dear George, may no uneasy reflection obtrude to damp the pleasure of our interview! and should you discover

the abode of one equally unfortunate, equally wretched as myself, let the natural tenderness of your heart soften the asperity of your resentment, and the remembrance of an innocent infant plead to you for the life of his father."

Without waiting for his reply, she hastened to her own apartments, where she was soon joined by Violante, whose curiosity was greatly excited to learn the cause of Mary's mysterious concealment.

Notwithstanding the light and volatile nature of Miss D'Eresby, she possessed great quickness of feeling, and a tenderness of heart, that made her more constant in friendship than in love. She listened with breathless attention to the narration of Mary, clasped her affectionately to her bosom, and sobbed aloud at the recital of woes which had blighted the peace of mind of one so dear to her—"Never, Mary," said she, embracing her tenderly, "shall you complain of my being unworthy this proof of your affection: I know, and I regret that my disposition is unset-

tled and wavering; yet *you* at least shall find me constant; we will not separate from each other. But, my dearest Mary, you do not surely mean, with your personal attractions, to remain always single? I am sure that I should have married long before this, had I been you."

"Perhaps you would," said Mary, smiling through her tears; "but my heart, Violante, like the needle, remains true to one object."

Violante could not comprehend this sort of constancy; she thought that women were made to be adored, and that life was not worth having, unless it was devoted to love.

The anxiety which preyed on the mind of Mary, lest her brother should fulfil his promised vengeance, was too acute to be wholly concealed from the observation of sir William and lord D'Eresby. Both watched her with solicitude, yet from different feelings. Sir William was pained to see that the delicacy of her situation, with respect to her having the charge of

young Donald, had brought on her the notice of the malevolent. Hints had even been thrown out before him, injurious to the purity of Mary's moral character; and sir William's refined ideas would not permit him to think of making any woman his wife whose name had ever been tarnished by the breath of scandal. Still he continued to observe the same steady line of conduct towards her as before, which increased the confidence of Mary, and enabled her to treat him with the innocent familiarity of a sister.

Lord D'Eresby, impressed by the thought that Donald was her son, and that nothing but seduction could have induced his mother to disown him, only waited for a favourable opportunity to inquire into the nature of her attachment for her *cousin*, and to avow that passion which was visible to all but herself, and to which George had alluded on taking leave of her.

Sir William's watchful eyes had long discovered the tenderness which beamed

in those of his lordship, whenever he approached the pensive orphan. He saw and trembled for what might be her fate, should his lordship exert to her injury those powers of dangerous eloquence with which nature had gifted him. A circumstance soon occurred which gave a new turn to the thoughts of sir William.

The letter which Mary had hid from George, on the morning of his departure, was from Mrs. Monteith; it was written under great bodily pain, occasioned by a severe illness, brought on since she had broken the blood-vessel; but the affliction of her mind seemed to preponderate. Monteith was in daily expectation of being ordered with his regiment to Plymouth, for embarkation, and her health rendered her unable to accompany him, as she had wished. This intelligence deeply affected Mary, who, with singular generosity, nightly offered up her prayers for the recovery of Agnes.

George had now been absent ten days,

and Mary was sitting with Violante in her own chamber, when Sophy came by appointment to bring little Donald, to spend the day with his mother, who was really indisposed, from the constant anxiety of mind which she had undergone for the last fortnight. By the persuasion of Violante, Mary consented to let the child remain all night, and Sophy was dismissed, with a message from each to Mrs. Byron. She had scarce got to the end of the gallery, when she returned to tell Miss Seymour that the beach was full of soldiers, who had arrived that morning to be embarked on board the transports—"They are all Scotchmen," said Sophy, "and some of the handsomest men I ever beheld."

She then ran away, eager to see as much of them as she could.

Violante caught the child from the arms of her friend, who with difficulty kept herself from fainting—"Dearest Mary!" said Miss D'Eresby, supporting her with the

vacant arm, "try to recover yourself; I will go down to my father, and learn what regiment it is."

Mary motioned that she might leave her; and Violante, placing the laughing boy on the lap of his trembling mother, hastened to her father to learn the necessary information.

Lord D'Eresby had just mounted his horse, when the light and elegant form of Violante, in the marble-hall, made him pause. He was going to invite to dinner all of the officers who remained on shore.

"But what regiment is it, my dear father?"

"The ——, one of the finest Highland corps in the kingdom."

Violante flew back to her friend with the confirmation of all her fears—"Dear Mary! your agitation authorizes me to believe that the person you mentioned to me belongs to the ——. Good God! how singular, if *he* should be among those whom my father will invite to dinner!"

"Singular indeed! but though your

suspicions are true, my Violante, my agitation is increased by the dread I have of George's arrival. The high spirit of my brother cannot brook what he conceives an insult offered to his family; if they should meet, how dreadful would be the event!"

On lord D'Eresby's return, he came to acquaint his daughter that he had engaged six of the officers to dinner.—"Among them," said he, "is captain Monteith, esteemed 'the handsomest man of the age.' As I wish to pay every tribute of respect to these brave men on their leaving England, perhaps for ever, tell your aunt, Violante, that I request that she will favour me by doing the honours of the table, while you and Miss Seymour can enchant their senses with some of their own native melodies."

Mary, shuddering, entreated his lordship to excuse her. Indeed the deathlike paleness of her features too well gave credit to the assertion of indisposition; and lord D'Eresby, alarmed by her appearance,

pressed her hand in anxious fondness, beseeching her to let him send for his physician—"Lovely Mary!" said he, in a voice of real tenderness, "I shall be miserable all day unless you consent to have advice. Shall Violante remain with you? perhaps even the prattle of this sweet boy disturbs you."

"Oh no! he serves to amuse me," replied Mary: "I thank your lordship for your kindness, but I shall be better as soon as this nervous headache quits me. Pray do not let my absence rob you of the company of Miss D'Eresby."

His lordship kissed her hand affectionately, expressing his vexation at the provoking cause which prevented her from gracing his table by her presence; then reluctantly left her to the care of his daughter.

Mary passed the morning in feverish inquietude; every sound made her start, lest it should be the arrival of her brother. She looked at her watch every moment, as the hour of dinner drew nigh—that hour

which would conduct once more to the same abode with herself Monteith, the beloved of her soul, the father of her child. She saw the beautiful daughter of lord D'Eresby dressed for the occasion in the most splendid habiliments, in order to gratify the taste of her father; she received her friendly embrace as the dinner-bell summoned her to the dining-room, where every delicacy of art and nature was provided for the warriors, and served up to them on the magnificent service of plate belonging to his lordship.

Violante would behold the form of him she idolized—Violante would inhale the perfume of his breath—would gaze at liberty on the manly and handsome person of Monteith; while she, whom perhaps he still loved, was weeping over his son in all the agonies of fear and suspense. Pressing her little boy closely to her beating bosom, Mary paced up and down the gallery, pausing every instant, as if in hopes to catch the sound of Monteith's voice, or listening with dread lest the

footsteps of her brother should reach her ear.

When lady Estifania and Violante retired from table, they came to inquire after the health of Mary—"I am terribly disappointed, my dear Miss Seymour," said her ladyship, "at your unlucky indisposition, which not only robbed us of the pleasure of your society, but has deprived you of seeing one of the handsomest men I ever beheld. I wish it were possible that you could somehow contrive to see him."

"I know how this is to be effected," cried Violante, delighted; "if Mary will come with me, I'll engage to give her a full view of our guests; one peep through the glass door of the antichamber will give her a sight of the whole company."

The heart of Mary beat with increasing violence; she hesitated. Was it not criminal to go intentionally to look on the husband of Agnes? yet was he not the father of her boy?

Lady Estifania seconded the proposal of

her niece, and promised to wait with the child until they returned—"Be steady, Violante," said her ladyship; "I would not have you discovered for the universe; the world would judge very severely of me, were it known that I sent two such young women upon a *gazing* expedition."

Violante supported the trembling form of her friend into the antichamber leading to the dining-parlour. The voices of the officers were heard as they approached the glass door; a silk curtain concealed the interior of the dining-room from their view. The trembling of Mary increased as the mellow tones of Monteith's silvery voice stole upon her ear; they vibrated to her soul, and she stopped the hand of Violante for a moment from undrawing the curtain. Recovering, she dropped the hand of her friend, who, pulling a small portion of it aside, discovered the warrior guests of her father, by whose side was placed the noble and dignified Monteith.

"That officer whose face is now to-

wards us," whispered Miss D'Eresby, "is the handsomest man of the age. Does he not deserve the title?"

Mary had no power to reply; every faculty she possessed was absorbed in the contemplation of Monteith's beloved countenance. Arrayed in the Highland uniform of his regiment, he brought to her recollection the day on which she had first beheld him: yet his form was not so round, neither was his cheek so deeply tinged with Nature's vivid bloom; while the fire of his eye, "which melted in love, and which kindled in war," seemed to have lost a part of its native brilliancy.

Mary continued to gaze, scarce conscious where she was, until the whisper of Violante, who inquired if her friend was among them, made her sensible of her situation, and of the probable danger which even now might encompass the father of her little darling. A movement of one of the officers made them hurry back to lady Estifania, who, with her niece, soon descended to the drawing-room, where the

Macfarlanes and some other ladies had been invited to pass the evening.

Mary, left alone to her own sad thoughts, had leisure to reflect upon the singular chance which had enabled her to again behold him whom she had once fondly deemed the partner of her life. Perhaps even now she had taken her last look of his adored features; the form so idolized by her might be destined to fall on foreign ground, and the countenance so beautiful, on which she had pressed her lips in all the endearments of connubial tenderness, might be violated and defaced by the trampling of horses, and the fury of the enemy. She clasped her boy convulsively to her bosom, and sobbed aloud, from the horror of the picture her imagination had drawn.

Sir William, whose solicitude had brought him to inquire how she was, stood motionless at the sight of her deep distress. The lovely boy, equally alarmed, stretched forth his little arms towards the face he knew; and Mary, vexed and dis-

mayed, suffered him to go to sir William, while she endeavoured to account for her anguish.

"If you have a grief, my dear sister," cried sir William, in a voice of tender sympathy, "and the advice or assistance of thy brother can soften it, do not hesitate to disclose to me the cause; I shall be too happy to prove my readiness to execute the dying wish of our dear Maria. Tell me, can I alleviate the sorrow which I have just beheld?"

Mary flung back the shining ringlets which overshadowed her face, and turning on sir William her eyes, still humid with tears, said hesitatingly, "My heart is ever ready to acknowledge your goodness, sir William; when you know the reason of my present alarm, you will cease to wonder at my tears. Among the officers who dine to-day with lord D'Eresby is one who has unfortunately wounded deeply the feelings of Mr. Fitzroy. In fact, it was to seek him that George hurried to London. Thank God they cannot yet

have met! but as I expect my cousin to return every hour, I dread the consequences, which may be fatal to both, should he arrive before the officer has embarked. Perhaps, sir William, you can devise some plan to gain information (at the inn where George will put up) of his arrival, and invent something to detain him from coming here until they are gone. Oh, if you could do this, if you can prevent the fatal effusion of blood, which must otherwise ensue, my gratitude to you will be eternal."

Sir William cast a look of suspicious inquiry, first on Mary, then on the child —"All that I can do to serve you shall be done," said he gravely; "but how is that man to be envied who has power to excite in your bosom so strong an interest for his fate. Lord D'Eresby has prevailed on the officers to remain until morning, when they will embark, should the wind prove favourable. Does your cousin know how tenderly your heart beats for his safety? surely if he did, he would not

rashly endanger an existence so highly prized by you."

"He is well aware how dearly I love him," said Mary, innocently; "neither would he, in any other instance, willingly give me pain. But when his honour is wounded, all other feelings must give place to that."

"Pardon me," said sir William, agitated, "if I venture to ask a question, which, as *you* are ignorant of its importance, may seem at this moment impertinent. Has not Mr. Fitzroy a sister, who was under the care of a Mrs. Scorpion, since become lady Blenheim?"

Mary, embarrassed, replied in the affirmative.

"You little imagine," continued sir William, "that at one time in my life I was acquainted with that sister. She was then only fourteen; my intimacy was short, but my attachment to her memory remains to this moment. I have endeavoured to learn her fate, but in vain: the

strong resemblance you bear to her has frequently deluded my fancy; but the pensive cast of your features, and your different name, dispelled the illusion. Her countenance was all life, all animation. Heaven grant that it is still the same! perhaps you know her, and can give me the long wished-for information."

Mary felt herself placed in a situation truly distressing: the eyes of sir William were fixed inquiringly on her face, anxiously awaiting her reply. To continue silent was impossible; yet how could she answer his questions?—"Pardon me, sir William," at length she said, "if I seem reluctant to gratify your request: the fate of her whom you honour by your friendship has, like mine, been singularly unfortunate. At a future time I may be permitted to acquaint you with her short history: yet this I may surely say, that she has ever retained a grateful sense of the disinterestedness of your conduct, and to this hour remembers you with esteem."

"And does she indeed remember me?"

said sir William, mournfully; "and has that dear bosom been a prey to anguish? Oh that it had been my lot to secure it from every ill, that it had been my happy lot to have become the husband of my little friend! Once you authorised me to call you by the sacred name of Mary. Dearest Mary Seymour! tell me, I conjure you, is the husband of your cousin living, or is she a widow? has she a child on whom I could lavish my tenderness, or are her griefs of a nature that will not admit of the consolations of friendship?"

"I dare not explain the cause of her griefs," replied Mary, pressing to her lips involuntarily the hand of sir William—"A time may come when you shall know them; I feel also that I must not reply to your questions. Yet, could her sorrows admit of relief, such friendship as yours would sure alleviate them."

"Unfortunate mystery!" exclaimed sir William, "that thus seems to involve the fate of the two Marys. Yet let me con-

sole myself that I at least am permitted to prove my esteem for you; I will make it my business to learn the instant that Mr. Fitzroy arrives, and if possible detain him from the dreaded sight of his enemy."

Mary, again left to herself, endeavoured to compose her spirits: she put her little boy to bed, whom she had detained up beyond his usual hour; then waited impatiently for the presence of Violante, who good-naturedly sat up with her till her repeater had gone one. The hope that, as her brother had not yet arrived, his good fortune might detain him until the next day, tranquillized in some measure the agitation of her mind. She flung herself on the bed, by the side of her slumbering infant, and prayed that Heaven might watch over the life of his beloved father.

The hospitality of lord D'Eresby kept up his guests until morning was far advanced, when they retired to the apartments which had been assigned to them. Monteith staid beyond the rest, to look at some pictures which were in one of the

rooms through which he passed. He then ascended to the western gallery; but feeling no inclination to sleep, he amused himself with examining its contents, till at length opening the door of the apartment next him, he passed through a sitting-room, which was faintly illumined by the first beams of the morning, into the chamber to which he imagined he had been directed. The beauty of its decorations, and the tasteful disposal of the various articles, the exquisite landscapes which hung round it, and the rich toilet, whose golden ornaments glittered from the rays of a silver lamp which stood on a table near it, immediately impressed Monteith with an idea that he had mistaken the chamber. He was retreating softly, when a deep sigh made him pause; he was proceeding, but the sound of his own name, in a tone of distress, once more arrested his steps. A convulsive sob, succeeded by these words—"Save him! save him! it is Monteith!" made him turn hastily towards the bed. He gently

withdrew the silken curtain; a youthful form of graceful proportion, clad in mourning, lay extended on the bed. He bent over to catch a glimpse of the face—it was of his adored, his never-to-be-forgotten Mary.

An exclamation of surprise and joy, uttered by Monteith, made Mary start from her pillow. She looked wildly at him; the impression of her dream still remained, and she thought that it was the spirit of Monteith which she now beheld, till, clasped to his breast, and feeling the pressure of his lips to hers, she no longer doubted of his existence.

The rapture of Monteith at this unexpected meeting took from him for some minutes the power of utterance; he continued to hold her in his arms, and to gaze with doting fondness on each well-known feature; nor were the feelings of Mary less tender, on being once more clasped to the bosom of the father of her child.

Raising her head from his shoulder, and

looking intently in his face—"Are you safe, Monteith, quite safe?—and have you not seen my angry brother? oh, I was dreaming that his sword had pierced your side, and that I saw you fall."

"No, most adored!" replied Monteith, trembling with excess of tenderness, "I have not seen Mr. Fitzroy; but if I had, my arm could never be raised against the brother of my Mary. Oh, my beloved! and do I again enfold you in my embrace? do I again clasp you to my heart? and am I still remembered with affection? has not the sense of your own injuries steeled your bosom against my miseries?"

Mary turned on him her beautiful eyes; no traces of resentment or reproach were there; nothing was to be read in them but the undiminished tenderness of a heart that still beat only for him.

Monteith passionately pressed his lips to hers—"My God! what have I not endured since that fatal night which robbed me of my Mary's presence! what distraction, doubt, and horror, have alternately

possessed my soul! But amidst madness, despair, and dissipation's baneful power, still, Mary, have I preserved inviolate thy sacred image. See," he cried, tearing open his plaid, "see where it rests. Ah, Mary! it would be presumptuous for me to hope that my picture has been preserved amidst the conflict of jarring feelings which at times *must* have shook your mind to agony."

Mary drew from her bosom the hidden miniature; and taking off the case, proved to Monteith the falsity of his fears.

"By Heavens!" he exclaimed, trying to conceal the starting tear, "I am not worthy this matchless proof of noble affection. Do you then, indeed, forgive me, Mary? Oh God! I cannot forgive myself: the sword of her brother would now indeed be welcome."

"Oh, say not so," cried Mary, straining him to her breast in an agony of tenderness; "say not so, Monteith; the hour that deprives thee of life must also rob me of mine. See," said she, leading him

to the other side of the bed, and gently drawing down the clothes, "see our little angel; you must live for him, if not for his mother."

Monteith bent in painful fondness over his sleeping son; he pressed his glowing cheek with all a father's pride, yet it was mingled with agony. Softly covering again the pledge of their mutual love, Monteith said—"Providence, my Mary, has deigned to listen to the prayers of a wretch, who nightly petitioned that he might be permitted to behold you once more before he quitted England, perhaps for ever: my wish is gratified when I had given up every hope. Oh, Mary! my beloved, my adored Mary! I see you once again, I press you to my breaking heart, I hear from your own lips that I am forgiven, and Death has now no terrors."

"Talk not of dying, I beseech you," said Mary, with a shudder of horror; "the worst is now over; I once thought that it was impossible for me to have lived thus

long bereft of your society; but Heaven has enabled me to bear up against the severity of our separation, for the sake of our helpless infant."

"I would follow your example, Mary, but that I find it to be impossible to bring my mind to think coolly upon your loss. All that the tenderest affection could suggest, has been done by Agnes to make me friends with myself; but the eternal struggle between love and duty still continues to harass my soul, and to render my existence insupportable. Vain are the efforts of reason, gratitude, nay, even of religion; vain the allurements of pleasure, or of intoxication. Still, Mary, your loved idea fills my heart, and triumphs over every subordinate passion."

The tears of Monteith now mingled with those of Mary. At length, raising himself from her shoulder, he inquired by what accident she had become acquainted with the family of lord D'Eresby. Mary then gave him a brief account of all that had passed since their separation; not for-

getting to mention the meeting with her cousin Delia—the affectionate bequest of Mrs. Chudleigh—her own change of name, and the maternal kindness of Mrs. Byron, as well as the singularity of her being once again introduced to the notice of her early friend.

Monteith started from her side; his cheek turned pale.

"What have I said to offend you, Donald?"

"Nothing, my best beloved Mary; it was a selfish, an ungenerous feeling, of which I am ashamed. Why should my heart feel ready to burst at the probability of sir William Beaufort restoring you to that situation in life of which my cruelty has robbed you?"

"Fear not, Monteith, for the stability of my affection; it has hitherto withstood all the suggestions of female pride, of wounded honour; and, though to acknowledge it may be criminal now in the sight of Heaven, yet never, never can I bring

myself to offer to another those vows of willing obedience which I made to you."

Again Monteith folded her to his bosom in speechless agony.

"Surely," said Mary, in a voice of trembling hope, "the Almighty will not punish us for thus giving way to a tenderness which has cost us so much to conquer. Even Agnes would not expect that, when chance conducted you once more to my presence, on the eve of leaving England to engage in all the horrors of battle, I should preserve the same heroism, the same forbearance, as when you were absent. Oh God! thou knowest my heart; I would not infringe on the rights of Agnes, I would not injure her peace for the world; but I cannot behold, perhaps for the last time, the father of my boy, without feeling that notwithstanding all my prayers, all my exertions, my heart remains unchanged."

"Heaven *will* pardon, my Mary, thy unintentional guilt—if guilt it may be

called—in remaining true to thy first affection. No crime can attach to *thee*, my beloved; the sin is mine—mine the atonement. Poor Agnes, were she capable of knowing of this interview, would only pity our sufferings. I leave England at this time with regret, since it prevents my attending on her at a moment when my presence is requisite: I grieve that I am denied the repayment of those attentions which she bestowed on me when your loss drove me to madness; and when, but for her kindness, I should perhaps not have lived to enjoy the bliss and pain of again embracing my Mary. The bursting of a blood-vessel has seriously injured her delicate constitution; and when I quitted town, she took leave of me with a strong foreboding that she should not live to witness my return."

Mary could not repress the tear of generous friendship at learning the illness of the amiable and gentle Agnes; while Monteith, for the first time, beheld with vexation and anger the rays of the rising

sun, as they beamed through the closed shutters of the room, and warned him that he must retire. Again he kissed the beloved pledge of mutual affection; again he strained the mother of his boy to his beating heart, he wiped the drops of anguish from her cheek, and felt her trembling lips pressed to his—"To the protection of Providence I resign you, oh most adored! living or dead, my spirit shall hover over you. Farewell, Mary! if not on earth, yet in heaven, we shall meet again."

Breaking from the circle of her arms, Monteith rushed out of the chamber, and by the light of the sun gained that to which he had been first directed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE conversation which sir William had had with Mary was not of a nature to

make a transient impression on his mind; and the sorrow which he felt on learning that his little friend was not happy, was increased by the conviction that her lovely cousin was equally unfortunate.

After passing a restless night, he rose early, anxious to know the state of the weather, and meaning to call himself at the inn where George was expected to alight. He was just quitting his room when he heard the door opposite to him, and which belonged to Mary's apartments, open. Retreating hastily, he closed his own, leaving sufficient space for him to see who it was, that at that early hour had disturbed the slumbers of Mary. To his surprise and horror, he beheld one of the Highland officers: the form, the air, the graceful movements, betrayed Monteith.

Sir William turned sick, and leant for support against the wall. Where now was the blushing modesty, the timid innocence of Mary? where the bashful diffidence that shunned the gaze of admiration, when she suffered a man to pass his

night in her chamber? it was for *him*, then, more than for her cousin, that she had testified such extreme agitation. The mystery was now revealed; the features of her infant *nephew* were stampt by the manly beauty of Monteith; the child was his, and sir William could only account for what he had just seen by supposing that Mary was his mother.

Again the heart of sir William felt the chill of disappointed affection: the occasional hope which had at times illumined his bosom was now no more. The woman whose likeness to his little friend had first called forth his tenderness, and implanted in his breast the most honourable wishes, was, he feared, even unworthy of his pity, since he had heard that Monteith was a married man. She was, however, unfortunate and unhappy; her conduct since he had known her, proved that she was not familiar with guilt; and though sir William gave up every idea of disclosing to her his attachment, he resolved nevertheless to fulfil his promise to Mrs.

Chudleigh, and to render her all the assistance in his power, now that she had condescended to ask it. He therefore, according to his first intention, proceeded to the inn; but Mr. Fitzroy was not yet arrived.

Lord D'Eresby, after giving his visitors an elegant breakfast, accompanied them to the beach in order to see them embark: the wind was fair, the sails were unfurled, and the cheering of the spectators followed them to the distant vessels. The guests of baron D'Eresby stood on the deck; the noble figure of Monteith was conspicuous above the rest. At that instant the brother of Mary arrived in a chaise and four; he leapt out of the carriage; rage and disappointment flashed from his dark eyes, as the receding ships met his gaze, while those of sir William beamed with generous satisfaction.

"You are come too late, Fitzroy," said lord D'Eresby, giving him his hand; "a few minutes sooner and you would have shook hands with our gallant soldiers, who

have just bade perhaps a last adieu to the white shores of England; you would also have seen the noble Monteith, who is esteemed 'the handsomest man of the age,' and, by my soul! he deserves the title."

George bit his lips; passion convulsed his frame—"I have travelled post, my lord," he replied, "that I might arrive before their embarkation; but fate has denied my wish."

"Perhaps you have a friend among the officers? I had the honour of entertaining some of them yesterday, and regretted your absence."

"No, my lord, it was not a *friend* whom I hastened to meet; it was a man who had deeply injured me, whom I was anxious to call to an account."

"If that was your intention, I rejoice that it is frustrated," replied lord D'Eresby, with sincerity; "one or other might have fallen, and my country at this moment could ill spare the loss of one of its brave defenders."

They now returned to D'Eresby House, when George, impatient to behold his sister, soon hastened to her apartments. Never had the heart of Mary felt so elated at the sight of her brother as at this moment; she flung herself on his neck and wept; but they were tears of gratitude to God, who had preserved him from the sight of Monteith.

"Had I but arrived one half-hour sooner, Mary, I should have accomplished the aim of my journey; all my inquiries to find out his abode were fruitless. Monteith has this time escaped me; but, if he lives to return to England, let him beware. Lord D'Eresby tells me, Mary, that several of the officers dined with him yesterday. Was Monteith among them? and were you present?"

"No, my dear brother, I excused myself on the plea of being unwell," replied Mary, trembling and confused.

"Your looks give credit to the assertion. Ah, my sister, would to God that I could once hear you say that your heart

was as indifferent to Monteith as it ought to be."

"Let us drop a subject painful to us both," said Mary, "and tell me, George, have you seen Delia?"

Here is a letter from Delia herself; but I suppose you will hardly believe, Mary, that the sight of me has evidently been of service to my aunt. When I called on her, I was received by Barbara and Elizabeth with great kindness; they conducted me into lady Sarah's bed-room. Delia, who was reading to her mother, attempted to speak to me, but could not; while her ladyship called me to her, and told me that she was very ill, very ill indeed; but that she thought my visit so kind, so affectionate, that she begged I would forget every disagreeable that had passed between us. She even condescended to inquire after you, and said that she should be glad if I would bring you to see her. After this, Mary, you may suppose that my resentment vanished; I spent the day with my cousins; Charles came home

to dinner, and gave me a welcome worthy of himself. All is now forgotten and forgiven, and I feel not ashamed to own that this reconciliation with my aunt has given me the truest pleasure. I passed some part of each day with my cousins while I was in London; we talked over the sports of our childhood; we reminded each other of several little circumstances that gave mutual gratification to us all; and, in short, I know only one thing that could make me more happy, but that is impossible. However, I shall certainly take the earliest opportunity of introducing you, Mary, to your aunt; and I sincerely hope that the old lady will continue to get better, and yet live many a year."

"But, my dear Delia; George, did you see much of her?"

"No, Mary, she was constantly with her mother; yet I contrived to thank her for the friendship she had shewn you, and to give her your letter; we had also some moments of private conversation, but you

were the chief subject. I think Delia much improved in her person; she was always amiable, but never more so than when watching the sickbed of her mother."

"She is a sweet girl," replied Mary, with affectionate warmth; "and if so highly interesting when fulfilling the duties of a daughter, what would she not be as a wife and mother? Delia, it is true, does not possess either a face or figure which would fascinate the senses, like those of some women, the moment they are seen; but yet she has the superior advantage of being certain to *retain* the heart she once makes captive."

George looked unusually thoughtful—"Where," said he hastily, "is Violante? I should have thought that she would not have been thus long in following me to your chamber. And who is that young man I saw in the drawing-room, to whom lord D'Eresby was paying such great attention?"

"He is the only son of sir Edgar Mor-

daunt," replied Mary, "and arrived this morning on a visit to lord D'Eresby, who appears extremely partial to him. He has, I fear, received a wound that will for ever disable him from being of further use to his country; but if rumours are to be believed, my dear George, we may expect shortly to enjoy the blessings of peace, a blessing which every humane bosom must long have ardently prayed for."

On their returning to the drawing-room, lord D'Eresby expressed his satisfaction at seeing Mary leave her chamber—"I hope," said he, "that you will be sufficiently recovered to assist Violante in the necessary preparations for a dance which I mean to give this day week; and as I could very ill bear that even my friend sir William should be beforehand with me, I must now solicit, my dear Miss Seymour, that you will do me the favour to be my partner for the alternate dances."

"Your lordship need not apprehend any disappointment from *me*," replied sir William gravely, "as it is more than pro-

bable that I shall only be a *spectator*, not a *partaker*, of your lordship's happiness."

"Fie, sir William," cried the baron; "at your time of life I should think that a dance was the most exhilarating of all amusements. What say you, Mr. Fitzroy? I hope you will hold yourself disengaged, and remember that I shall always expect to see you in your place at my dinner-table."

George made his lordship a suitable reply; then turning to Violante, who sat on a couch near Mr. Mordaunt, he asked her if she would honour him with her hand? The confusion she manifested in giving her consent, and the tenderness which beamed in the eyes of young Fitzroy, immediately excited a suspicion in the mind of Mr. Mordaunt, that this was the favoured lover of Miss D'Eresby. The idea was more painful to him than his wound, and the instantaneous change in his features, which was noticed by George, created also in his bosom an uneasy sensation, arising from the recollection of Violante's

words on the morning that she had discovered him in the arms of his sister. Actuated by the same feelings, both these young men regarded each other with no very friendly sentiments; and even Violante appeared embarrassed and constrained in the presence of her rival lovers.

Mary beheld the uneasiness of her brother and her friend with concern and alarm; yet it was a subject of so much delicacy that she forbore to touch upon it to Violante, lest she should give offence. She had yet another cause of disquietude, proceeding from the distant and ceremonious behaviour of sir William Beaufort towards her. Unconscious of having given him any just reason for the alteration in his manner, she nevertheless continued to conduct herself as usual. The change in sir William seemed also to produce one in lord D'Eresby: every day his attachment became more and more visible; the tenderness of his voice and eyes betrayed the language of his heart; but Mary had

not yet allowed herself to think that they proceeded from the feelings of a lover. Her brother, however, was not to be deceived; he saw that his sister was the principal object of his lordship's attention, and he felt an indescribable joy at the opportunity which would therefore occur of seeing her raised to a rank in society equal to his most sanguine wishes. For this reason he delayed speaking to Mary on the subject of her removal, hoping that his lordship would shortly give her a right to appear before her aunt as lady D'Eresby.

On the evening of the ball, the family of lord D'Eresby laid aside their mourning, and Violante and Mary appeared in dresses of white satin richly trimmed with foreign lace. Violante, the child of wealth, was ornamented with valuable diamonds. Mary's graceful arms and neck displayed the virgin pearl, yet on her constant bosom she wore the emerald gift of Delia, and next her heart remained the picture of Monteith. Her appearance was

lovely, modest, and attractive; the pensive cast of her features gave way to sisterly affection, as she met the approving glance of her brother on entering the grand saloon, which was now open for the reception of the company.

Violante's beautiful form, which seemed to vie with the Medicean Venus, next caught the eyes of her naval lover. What is it that I appear to look for, thought George, in the exquisite person of my Violante? what is it but the blushing delicacy of my sister? had she but this, she would indeed be perfect.

Lord D'Eresby and George were standing opposite to a large mirror, which reflected the elegant figures of Mary and her friend, who were at some distance from them. The eyes of his lordship and of his companion were intently fixed on the mirror; the former, turning suddenly, beheld the admiration which glowed in those of George—"Fitzroy," cried his lordship, leaning familiarly on his shoul-

der, "can any thing be more lovely than her appearance to-night? how easy and graceful are all her movements, how beautiful the proportion of her limbs!"

"Beautiful, indeed, my lord; it is impossible for any man to gaze on such an assemblage of charms without losing his liberty."

"Then I may presume you have no longer to boast of *your* freedom," said his lordship hastily; "but, pray, may I without impertinence inquire if the attachment is mutual?"

"My lord!" cried George, much embarrassed by the question.

"Pardon me, I am more interested in your reply than you imagine, Mr. Fitzroy. Remember, you have yourself acknowledged that no man can gaze on the beauties of Miss Seymour, and yet preserve his liberty."

"It is *your* pardon that I must ask, my lord," replied George, inwardly delighted; "my remark did not apply to Mary, but to your lovely daughter."

The face of his lordship brightened with unexpected pleasure—"Ah ha, Fitzroy! what, has my wild and volatile Violante enlisted you under her banners? beware, my friend, the heart of that young creature is as light and flexible as her form."

Saying this he moved forward to receive some company, who at that moment came in, and George to join his sister and Miss D'Eresby.

The Miss Macfarlanes, attracted by the handsome person of young Fitzroy, condescended to inquire after the health of Miss Seymour. The youngest was a pretty, shewy girl, very lively, and esteemed so good a dancer that George engaged her for the next set, to the no small mortification of her elder sister, whose spleen was still more increased by the approach of lord D'Eresby to claim the hand of Mary.

The company now passed on to the ball-room, through the illuminated apartments, glittering with brilliant mirrors, which reflected over again the splendid ornaments

which enriched them, while the air was perfumed by the odour of hundreds of different plants, tastefully disposed about the chambers.

Violante looked and moved the enchantress of the scene; yet her heart was not as light as it was used to be. She saw that the eyes of Mr. Mordaunt followed all her motions with the keen jealousy of love: turning her own on her partner, suspicion appeared to lurk in his dark orbs, and the expression of his countenance was, to her imagination, less tender than before his journey to London. Remembering the coolness with which George had allowed her to depart on the morning that she had betrayed so much anger towards him, she resolved to pique his vanity by seeming to attend to every body but him.

Had Violante been acquainted with the real character of her naval lover, she would have known that *his* was not a temper to be trifled with; for, though capable of loving to enthusiasm, his high spirit could

not brook, even in the woman he adored, any shew of tyranny or feminine caprice. The fetters which bound young Fitzroy must be so soft and silken that he could not feel their pressure. Violante had imprudently drawn hers too tight; they snapped, the captive half regained his freedom, but the smile, the caresses of his mistress, lured him back again.

When George conducted his beautiful partner into the refreshment-room, they were followed by Mr. Mordaunt, who tenderly inquired if she felt fatigued; regretting at the same time his inability to enjoy the happiness of his favourite amusement. On the return of George, he rose, and bowing politely, resigned to him his seat, then mingled with the company.

"Have you been long acquainted with Mr. Mordaunt?" said George fretfully; "he seems to have all the privileges of an old friend."

"I knew him when I was quite a girl," replied Miss D'Eresby, in a careless manner; "he is the son of a highly-valued

friend of my father's, and therefore at liberty to act as he pleases in our house."

"Indeed, Violante! his situation then is truly enviable; since, if he *pleased* to ask the fair hand of his lordship's daughter, the son of a *highly-valued friend* would scarcely be refused."

Violante coloured deeply, and rising to avoid the confusion of a reply, made an excuse to speak to Miss Macfarlane, with whom she sauntered back to the ball-room; not, however, with any intention of dancing. Resolved to prove the extent of her power over the heart of young Fitzroy, she took the arm of Edgar Mordaunt, and not contented with passing and repassing with him through the several apartments allotted for company, they sat down on a couch at the end of the ball-room, where Mr. Fitzroy must necessarily observe them. To the great mortification of Violante, she saw that she had missed her aim: George appeared perfectly unconcerned, and even laughed and chatted with his partner, the youngest Miss Mac-

farlane, who, on her part, felt quite delighted at the imaginary conquest she had made.

Mary, who had noticed the changeful manners of Violante, felt pained at what she deemed a display of coquetry unworthy of herself; yet the tender assiduities of lord D'Eresby did not long permit her to dwell upon so disagreeable a subject as the failings of a friend. It was now that, for the first time, she began to suspect the real motive of his lordship's attentions. The exhilarating exercise of the dance gave to her cheek its once natural bloom, and heightened the lustre of her eyes; while the praises they called forth from her noble partner were more warm than friendship sanctioned.

Sir William Beaufort continued to preserve the same distant civility towards Mary which he had adopted since the painful discovery he had made of Monteith's visit. He chose to avoid dancing, because he thought that honour forbade

his soliciting the hand of Mary, and his heart was too deeply occupied, his mind too fully engaged, to pay proper attention to another.

More and more anxious to be restored to his esteem, which she now feared she had forfeited, though unconscious in what manner, Mary endeavoured to attract his notice by every innocent artifice; she spoke to him as often as she had an opportunity; she even inquired, as soon as she was disengaged, if he still retained the same disinclination to join in the festivities of the evening—"I had flattered myself," said she, in a hesitating voice, "that you would have done me the honour, for such I should have conceived it, sir William, of breaking your resolution in my favour."

The countenance of sir William immediately relaxed; a smile of ineffable sweetness irradiated his features; he took her hand, and gently pressing it, said—"I can refuse you nothing, Mary; if it is your wish, although I had determined other-

wise, I will certainly be your partner for the next dances."

Mary was overjoyed at his willingness to oblige her; she acquitted herself so admirably that sir William could not refrain from repeating the following lines from a poem written by a gentleman of high literary talent:—

"Still as that angel figure I survey'd,
Down the glad dance in graceful motion fly,
Those flowing ringlets on thy neck display'd,
That lovely bosom heave the trembling sigh,
Those twinkling feet that 'neath thy garment play'd,
Celestial beauty met my raptur'd eye;
But, oh! ———"

"Here I must pause," continued sir William; "I am not authorised, Mary, to go further: the remainder of the poem is only applicable to the feelings of mutual love."

Mary well remembered the lines; they brought to her memory also those which he had once before repeated to her, when

she was a girl, from the same author. Sir William seemed also to have the same thoughts; he inquired if she had read the novel of Mary De Clifford; if not, he would send next morning to procure it for her."

"I have it among other books by the same writer," replied Mary; "if you will accept of it, it is at your service: it once belonged to your little friend."

Sir William's eyes sparkled with pleasure—"You could not bestow on me a present half so valuable," said he, with animation; "how shall I prove to you my thanks?"

"By remembering, sir William, that you generously promised to adopt me for your sister, and to point out to me any faults or follies that I might commit. Have you done this?"

"No, Mary, I have not; I perceive that you are aware of the change in my manners; it proceeds from a cause too delicate to discuss before a third per-

son. Dismiss it from your mind to-night, lovely Mary; I am your *friend*, I would be *more*, but dare not."

The approach of lord D'Eresby prevented the reply of Mary, and they walked with him into the refreshment-room; but the words of sir William sunk deep into the mind of his partner, who felt a shudder steal over her, lest any but the eye of Heaven had witnessed the retreat of Monteith from her chamber.

George, nearly at the same moment, passed with the two Miss Macfarlanes, who, ignorant of his relationship to Mary, felt envious at seeing him smile on her affectionately, as she leaned on the arms of sir William and lord D'Eresby.

"The vanity of that girl is intolerable," said the youngest.

"I wonder," replied Miss Macfarlane, "that his lordship should be so wilfully blind. Indeed, I am astonished that he persists in allowing a woman of doubtful character to be the companion of his daughter, and to associate with his friends."

George felt that he looked pale; he had faced the enemies of his country with undaunted bravery; had shed his blood in her defence; but the wounds which he received from the enemy, though severe, cut less deep than those now inflicted by Miss Macfarlane—"Are you acquainted with the family and connexions of Miss Seymour?" said he.

"I do not even wish it," replied Miss Macfarlane, spitefully; "all that I know of her is this—she came here with the late ward of baron D'Eresby; I suppose in the capacity of a humble dependent; for that lady left her at her death a valuable legacy for the care she had taken of her during her illness. She recommended her to the notice of lady Estifania Dorville, who positively seems as much bewitched by her as his lordship, who immediately engaged her to be the companion of his daughter, though I think it would have been shewing the duty of a parent if he had first inquired into the conduct and character of

the person to whom he confided the morals of Miss D'Eresby."

"Have you ever seen any thing improper in the behaviour of Miss Seymour?" inquired her brother.

"Not exactly improper," said Miss Macfarlane; "only that I think she suffers his lordship to pay her too much attention in public; surely she does not imagine that a nobleman of his immense property will ever make her his wife."

"But you said that her character was doubtful; have the goodness, my dear madam, to explain your meaning: you know not how deeply interested I am on this subject."

Miss Macfarlane, in whose presence her sister was generally silent, now suspected that George had been captivated by the beauty of Mary, and therefore secretly rejoiced that she had so good an opportunity of robbing her of *one* of her admirers—"Bless me, Mr. Fitzroy!" she said, "what, are you a stranger to the opinion so prevalent in this place, that Miss Seymour is

the *mother*, not the *aunt*, of the little boy who lives with the old lady near the sea-side?"

George gave a sudden start of anguish, which did not dismay his companion.

A smile of bitter pleasure played round her mouth—"You look unwell, Mr. Fitzroy; I fear that, like lord D'Eresby, you have allowed yourself to be caught, and that you feel a *tender* interest in the fate of Miss Seymour."

"The interest I feel, madam," replied George, turning upon her the lightning of his eyes, "is that of a relation; Miss Seymour is the descendant of a noble family, to whom I am also nearly allied. It is well, madam, that *your* sex is an excuse for the mean detraction you have uttered; but I would not advise any of *mine* to whisper even a hint of what you have so kindly disclosed to me, lest his life should pay the forfeit of his rashness. Let me also counsel you, madam, against a repetition of such calumnies; they cannot injure *her* whom they are intended to

wound, and will only draw on yourself the punishment you intended for another."

Saying this he bowed to the two sisters, and left them to comment as they pleased upon the vexation of having displayed their envy and ill-nature to a relation of their rival.

Notwithstanding the seeming coolness of George's reply, his feelings were deeply hurt by the conviction that Mary had acted with great weakness, in voluntarily exposing herself to censure by having her child so near her. It was what he had dreaded, what he had expected; it must be avoided in future: how could he tell, but that the mind of lord D'Eresby, tainted by this rumour, even now dared to dwell with rapture on the hope of possessing the beauties of Mary without bestowing on her his name and title?

Agitated by the tenderness of a brother's love, and trembling at the shadow of dishonour, George found it necessary to retire for a short time to recover his firmness. Wishing to escape observation, he

went to his sister's apartments, where he staid until he had acquired sufficient presence of mind to look and speak as usual.

He was on the point of leaving them, when the door suddenly opened, as if pushed against by some person; the darkness of the chamber prevented *them* from seeing him, but the lamps from the gallery enabled *him* to discover Violante and Mr. Mordaunt.

"Why have you followed me hither, Edgar?" said Miss D'Eresby, in a languishing tone, "have I not already told you how sincerely I pitied your distress? have I not done all in my power not to increase it? and did I not promise not to dance any more with Mr. Fitzroy, because I saw that it gave you pain? What more do you require of me?"

"It is not pity that I ask of you, Violante, it is love; the same ardent love which warmed your girlish bosom when I first saw you, which prompted you to yield to me the treasure of your virgin heart, which made you melt in my arms,

as my lips pressed yours, and which made you swear never to bestow your affections on another. Ah Violante! faithless yet beautiful, too soon were the warm kisses of Edgar effaced from your lips by those of Mr. Fitzroy. He is my rival, yet I esteem him; he is a brave man, a man of unsullied reputation; he knows not my prior claim; he believes that he possesses your first affections; he thinks that he is master of an undivided heart—he is deceived, Violante—half of it still is mine; deny it, sweet one, if you can."

Mordaunt flung his arm round the waist of Miss D'Eresby. The voluptuous beauty of her person, half-exposed to his view; the remembrance of the bliss he had formerly experienced when she hesitated not to return his passion with an energy of feeling far above her years, emboldened the enamoured lover: he pressed her yielding form to his bosom, and fixing his lips to hers, in tenderest accents said—"Am I not still dear to you, Violante?

have you the cruelty to abandon me for another?"

A deep sigh from the chamber made Violante start in terror from his grasp—"It is the spirit of Mrs. Chudleigh," said she, and sunk insensible on a couch at the end of the gallery.

Mordaunt, who had followed, now used every endeavour to recover her; he succeeded, and they returned to the ball-room.

"Where have you been, Violante?" said Mary; "I have looked for you in vain in all the apartments, at the request of lady Estifania."

"I left my fan in your room," replied Miss D'Eresby, "and went in search of it; but I have been so frightened! I am sure I heard the spirit of Mrs. Chudleigh; it was just such a deep sigh as hers; it terrified me beyond imagination—I fainted away in the gallery, and should have been there now, had not Mr. Mordaunt recovered me. I wish, Mary, that you

would fetch me the fan; for I shall never have courage to go there again to-night."

"Was the heart of a soldier also intimidated by your weak fears? could not Mr. Mordaunt have procured for you the fan? Ah Violante! are you acting with justice towards George in thus encouraging the tenderness of his rival?"

The cheek of Violante crimsoned with conscious shame.

"You are playing a hazardous game, my dear friend," continued Mary, "and the stake is your own happiness. I go, however, to obey your wishes."

George was just leaving the gallery as his sister entered it: the paleness of his naturally-glowing cheek alarmed Mary, who immediately inquired how long he had been unwell. George made no reply but taking the arm of his sister, returned with her to her chamber. She sat down by his side, and supported his head on her bosom; tenderly kissing his forehead, she besought him to tell her what was the matter.

"A trifle, my Mary," said her brother, as he breathed with difficulty, "only the total wreck of all my worldly hopes! Violante is unfaithful—she has deceived herself and me."

He then repeated, as well as his agitation would permit, what had passed between her and Edgar Mordaunt—"The deep sigh of agony which I could not repress, made her start from his arm; soon again it encircled her, as she sunk inanimate on the couch. His tenderness revived her; I did not disturb them—why should I? it was Mordaunt that first taught her bosom to thrill with passion's wildest throb; it was Mordaunt's kiss that first sucked the honey from her virgin lip; it is Mordaunt that deserves to reap the fruit of his victory."

"Dearest brother! but are you sure that Violante prefers him to you? she is young and volatile; the tenderness of her heart I know has led her to pity Mr. Mordaunt's sufferings; she is warm in her expressions, as in her attachments; thought-

less of consequences, she is governed only by the impetuous impulse of the moment, which in this instance has hurried her into an error, of which by this time she is fully sensible."

"Her repentance will come too late," replied George, looking sternly round the apartment; then springing forward, he caught the fan of Miss D'Eresby, and putting it in his pocket said, "*I* alone must deliver this to Violante; the pain I now endure is doubly severe from its being my second disappointment of the heart. Yet I know not which has pierced it most, the inconstancy of Violante, or the envenomed shaft of slander aimed against my sister's fame. To-morrow, Mary, I will explain to you what I mean. Beware, however, of the Macfarlanes: now let us return, I feel that I am able to support my part with the candid honesty of a British sailor."

They now entered the supper-room, which was splendidly illuminated; the tables glittered with gold and silver plate,

which were again reflected by the various crystal ornaments, round which the circling flowers shed forth their rich perfumes as voluntary incense to the fair.

Lord D'Eresby conducted Mary to her seat, and George placed himself next her. Violante's changeful looks betrayed the uneasiness of her mind as she took her place at the head of the second table, but her eyes were more frequently directed to that at which her father presided, while those of George never once turned towards her, a circumstance that filled her with secret forebodings.

Gladly did Miss D'Eresby quit a repast at which she had scarcely tasted of any thing: wearied even by the tender importunities of Mr. Mordaunt, she hurried into the ball-room in search of Mary. She found her; but before she could speak her fears, George was by her side. Summoning up all the courage of which he was master, he drew from his pocket the ivory fan, and presenting it to Violante, said—"The *spirit of Mrs. Chudleigh* sends

you this." Then bowing with cold politeness, he turned from her with a look which too well explained the state of his feelings, and the resolution he had taken.

Violante grasped the arm of Mary—"Ah, Heaven!" she exclaimed; "what has my thoughtless folly done? follow your brother, Mary, plead for me, or I am lost."

"Not to-night, my dear Violante; the discovery made by George of Mr. Mordaunt's prior claim has severely affected him; to-morrow I shall see him, to-morrow I will try all my influence to re-unite you."

The approach of lord D'Eresby, who came to claim the promised hand of Mary, now obliged her to separate from her unhappy friend, who, pensive and self-accused, wandered from room to room for the remainder of the ball. The golden rays of the rising sun, and the innumerable voice of heaven's choristers, warned the company to retire. At the pressing entreaty

of his lordship, George consented to remain and court the balmy influence of sleep within the walls of D'Eresby House; but the events of the evening were of a nature too important to be easily banished from his mind; and he therefore bent his steps towards the chamber of his sister, that he might impart to her his wishes before he met the family at the breakfast-table.

CHAPTER V.

MARY had not yet risen when George entered her bed-room; the paleness of his cheek, and the heaviness of his eyes, betrayed his want of rest—"Ah, my brother," cried Mary, throwing her arms round his neck, as he stooped to kiss her, "you are unhappy, you have not been to bed; and your Violante, I am confident, participates in your uneasiness."

"Name her no more, my dear Mary; she is no longer mine; restore to her these coral beads, and this lock of her hair; the soul of your brother scorns to infringe on the rights of another. The day-dream of my happiness is gone by, but my honour remains; the arrow which has deepest pierced my bosom was thrown by Miss Macfarlane."

He then repeated to her that lady's conversation, and concluded by saying—"I can hardly excuse the affection of Mrs. Byron, which allowed her to yield to your entreaties; how was it possible to preserve unsullied the reputation of so young a woman as yourself, when your excessive kindness for your child betrays itself in every look and gesture? nothing could more strongly proclaim that the boy was yours, Mary, than your having him brought so great a distance to reside near you in a situation merely temporary. This weakness has been fatal to your character; it has even authorised the inquisitive and

illiberal to doubt that any relationship subsists between us; it would not be an unnatural conclusion, were it to be said that *I* was the *father* of your little *nephew*. Mary! Mary! it is this stain, this indelible disgrace, that wounds me more severely than the loss of the woman I adore. Honour has been my pilot; he has hitherto conducted me in safety through the rocks and shoals of love and pleasure; by persevering to follow in his track, I have been obliged to abandon what was most dear to me, to leave behind my heart's fondest treasures; but my reward has been worthy the struggle—it is the approving voice of my own conscience. Would to God, my sister, that you had but made the attempt to subdue a passion so fatal in its consequences!"

"And have I not?" said Mary, wiping off her tears; "alas! my brother, the sacrifices *you* have made to honour cannot exceed those of mine; what but the natural love of virtue, and an innate sense of justice, made me withstand the pleadings

of the man I idolized? did I not fly from the presence of him who was dearer to me than life? did I not commit myself to the guidance of his father-in-law? but, above all, did I not read this, his last letter, and yet persist at the hazard of my existence to resign him to another?"

She now drew from her pocket-book the tender letter of Monteith, and gave it to her brother.

George, though strongly prejudiced against Monteith, did not suffer himself to be unjust even to an enemy. He read it with deep attention, then returned it to his sister—"I do not deny, Mary, but that his case is most hard; never would I have acknowledged Agnes for a wife; yet never could I have allowed the selfishness of my own feelings to betray your confiding innocence. It would have been more noble in Monteith to have disclosed at once the truth of his father's infamous conduct, to have resigned his commission, and to have devoted himself solely to your happiness. Yet I will not wound you, Mary, by even

hinting that you would have debased yourself so much as to become his mistress; the sacrifice which you have since made proves to the contrary: you must yet make another—your character demands it, your family demand it from you."

"Alas!" exclaimed his sister, "had you witnessed my agonies, had you seen the struggles which I have made, you would not require of me another; all my fortitude, all my powers of exertion, are now gone; nothing remains to cheer my withered hopes but my child. My brother's tender heart would not surely rob me of him, of him who is my only comfort."

George turned aside his head.

"My brother, my beloved brother! say, is not this the dreadful sacrifice you would impose? have I not resigned for ever his adored father, and would my brother bereave me of the only treasure which Heaven in its mercy has allowed me to retain?"

"Mary," replied George, pressing her

to his breast, "could I ordain it otherwise, you should never again experience a moment's uneasiness. But can *you*, who have so nobly conquered all selfish considerations, now consent to endure the horrors of a doubtful reputation? let the boy pass for mine; *I* will adopt the disinherited son of my enemy; *I* will educate and provide for his wants; let but the name of his mother remain unsullied by the breath of slander."

Mary sobbed aloud on the bosom of her brother; the black ribbon attracted his notice, his hand pressed against the miniature of Monteith as he folded his sister in his arms. Mary now trembled for the safety of her hidden idol, but she dared not refuse to gratify the curiosity of her brother—"It is for his son that I keep the likeness of the father sacred," said she, exposing the handsome countenance of Monteith to the gaze of George, who immediately perceived the strong resemblance which the features of the child bore to those of his father. He could not stifle a

sigh which escaped him at this fresh proof of his sister's tenderness; neither would his heart permit him to rob her of what he felt was most dear to her.

"The manly beauty of Monteith may well excuse the weakness of a female's passion," said George; "but the noble soul of my Mary ought to value most the beauties of the mind, the purity of the heart of man; all, however, that I now ask of you, Mary, is, that you will this week accompany me to town: I must not delay any longer your introduction to lady Sarah. Her countenance and protection, though it comes too late to save you from what is past, may prove of the highest importance to your future interest. Make then the communication of your journey known to the family as early as possible; I will call on Mrs. Byron after breakfast; she will of course accompany us to town; when there, I will make the proper arrangements to secure your character from future reproach."

"But you will not take my child from

me?" inquired Mary, in a tone of maternal terror.

"Be tranquil, my beloved sister; you shall always have the power of seeing him as often as you please."

Nothing could exceed the astonishment and vexation produced in the family of lord D'Eresby when Mary mentioned her intended journey. The countenance of his lordship immediately became thoughtful and gloomy, while that of sir William betrayed his surprise at so unexpected an event. Violante could not conceal her tears, but flinging herself on the bosom of her friend, wept aloud in the presence of them all. Even lady Estifania testified the liveliest regret, and hoped that Mary's absence would be merely temporary. Her niece, sobbing, declared her inability to part from Mary, who, in her turn, affected by the sincere love of Miss D'Eresby, could not help shedding tears as she returned her affectionate embrace.

"My Violante," said her father, raising

her lovely head, and taking her graceful form within his arms, "do not add to my vexation by the sight of yours; I know how dearly you esteem Miss Seymour, and I flatter myself that she returns your affection; you shall not be divided if your father can help it."

"My dear young friend," said lady Estifania, "I hope that no unintentional offence committed by any one of his lordship's family has given birth to this sudden resolution of yours to leave us. I hope also that you are sensible of my regard, and, I may add, of all our affections. Tell me then candidly, have you any cause of complaint?"

"None, my dear madam," said Mary, kissing her hand with animated gratitude; "from your ladyship, and from every individual of this dear and honoured house, I have met with steady and uniform kindness; the remembrance of it will ever live in my heart, and be deeply impressed on my memory. Since the return of Mr. Fitzroy from London, I have known that

it would be necessary for me to accompany him there; but I delayed mentioning it as long as I could, from a disinclination to give pain to my dear Violante."

"But may we not expect to have you return to us?" said Miss D'Eresby, still weeping.

"I fear not, my dear friend," replied Mary; "my engagements will most likely detain me in London for some time, but you shall always hear from me."

"Restrain this excess of sorrow, my Violante," said lord D'Eresby, fondly kissing the moist cheek of his graceful child; "have I not told you, that if possible you shall not be separated from your inestimable friend. Come, my Violante, let thy father dry thy tears, which could not flow more rapidly had you lost your lover."

"No lover can be more dear to me than Mary," replied Miss D'Eresby; "I shall be miserable, my father, if I lose her."

"It shall be thy father's study to prevent it. Go, my Violante, with your lovely friend, and first try your own eloquence

to persuade her to remain, before I venture to exert mine."

Violante now quitted the breakfast-room, followed by the eyes of her father and Mr. Mordaunt, while George rose also to call on Mrs. Byron.

"I shall expect you, Mr. Fitzroy, to dinner," said lord D'Eresby; "if we must lose you so soon, let us at least enjoy as much of your leisure time as you can spare."

George accepted the invitation, though he would fain have been spared the trial of beholding again the fair form of Violante. Unwilling, however, that his sister should suppose he shrunk from the temptation, he acceded to the polite desire of his lordship, and then bent his steps towards the habitation of Mrs. Byron, to whom he resolved to communicate what had passed between him and Miss Macfarlane on the night of the ball.

Violante meanwhile remained all the morning with Mary, inconsolable at her double loss. The real affection which she

felt for her friend made the serious change in the conduct of George less a matter of consideration than the privation she should experience from the absence of his sister—"Oh, my dear Mary!" said she, falling on her neck, "tell me that you forgive my imprudence. Say, has it not lessened me in your estimation? I have taxed myself severely for my follies, and sincerely lament the weakness which taught me to risk the loss of such a man as your brother. You have told me that there are no hopes of recovering his confidence; but why, Mary, must I lose at once my lover and my friend?"

Mary now explained to her the necessity of her hastening to London, in order that she might accept the offered friendship of her aunt.

"But my father loves you, I am confident," cried Miss D'Eresby; "it is in his power to do more for you than lady Sarah. You know his wealth, you know the goodness of his disposition; all that he has, all

that is mine, shall be yours, if you will not leave us."

"Dearest Violante," said Mary, returning her embrace, "lovely, generous girl! I want expressions to convey to you my feelings. Alas! how poor are words to delineate the language of the heart! it is not wealth, or power, or even the many personal attractions of your noble father, that could tempt me to swerve from my vow of faithful love to him who had my virgin heart. See, Violante, for the first time, the picture of my Donald's father. Is this a man to be soon forgotten?"

"Heavens!" cried Miss D'Eresby, "can I be deceived? is it not captain Monteith, 'the handsomest man of the age?' yes, yes, it is; the world does not contain *his* equal."

Mary pressed it to her lips, then returned it to the concealment of her own pure bosom—"Such is the man whom I resigned from feelings of justice," continued Mary; "but in my heart he still

lives. When I embrace my boy, when I imprint on his sweet mouth a mother's tender kiss, how can I forbear to cherish still the remembrance of his father?"

"Oh, my friend!" exclaimed Miss D'Eresby, "why did Nature bestow on me a heart capable of loving with all the wild delirium of passion, yet withhold from me the charm of thy matchless constancy? the loss of your brother's heart, the knowledge of my own, will in future save me from a similar mortification; yet still let me retain a share of thine, my Mary, and I will endeavour not to complain of my destiny."

At dinner every countenance, except that of Mr. Mordaunt, bore witness to the secret vexation of the mind. After the ladies had retired, lord D'Eresby, as if willing to drown in wine the recollection of the morning's painful discovery, pushed about the bottle with more freedom than usual. Even sir William, who was temperance itself, refused not to accept the offered bottle; and George, whom the

sight of Violante's melancholy had half unmanned, drank with less repugnance; while Mr. Mordaunt, who was an invalid, excused himself on that account, and joyfully hastened to the drawing-room.

It was late before the new votaries of Bacchus made their appearance; sir William was the most reasonable, George was melancholy, and lord D'Eresby uncommonly animated. Mary had just gone to her chamber as they entered, and his lordship immediately declared his intention of fetching her back, to accompany him and sir William in one of his favourite trios—

"Have I your consent, my dear Fitzroy," cried his lordship, "to intrude on the privacy of your lovely cousin's apartments?"

"You are a man of honour, my lord, that is my reply."

"Violante," said her father, "play to Fitzroy the song you were practising yesterday."

Violante rose with trembling limbs and burning cheeks to obey, while his lordship, with unsteady feet, sought the western

gallery. Mary had seated herself with her back towards the door, and was indulging herself in the painful luxury of gazing on the miniature of Monteith, when lord D'Eresby stole unperceived behind her. She gave a sudden start, and hastily replacing it in her bosom, turned and beheld his lordship—"Angelic Mary!" said he, catching both her hands, and half devouring them with kisses, "and have I at length succeeded in gaining an opportunity of disclosing to you my passion? yet say, loveliest of thy sex, whose picture was that on which you were gazing with so much tenderness? whose was it, Mary? tell me, my angel, I beseech you."

Mary, terrified by his looks and manner, and conscious that he had drank too freely, thought it best to soothe him to retire, rather than to evince the terror she felt—"It is the picture of a dear relation, my lord," said she, "whose loss I shall ever deplore; but come, my lord, I am ready to accompany you to the drawing-room."

"Stop, my sweetest girl, first let me on my knees acknowledge how truly I am yours. Dearest Mary, do not leave me; all that I have is yours, only bless me by your affection; I will not rise until you consent to make me the happiest of men."

"Pray, my lord, allow me to leave you now; another time I will listen to you, but let us now return to the drawing-room."

"No, Mary, I will not leave you until you have consented to be mine; think of what it is in my power to bestow on you. I care not for the idle rumours which prevail; all of my fortune which belongs not to my daughter, I will settle on you and your children; and as to the little Donald, no matter whether he is the nephew or the son of my adored girl, I will be a father to him for ever. Speak, Mary, will you still leave me?"

"Go, my lord, go!" said Mary, trembling with a variety of emotions, "I did not expect to receive an insult from *you*."

Go, my lord, I must insist upon your quitting me."

"How have I insulted you?" cried his lordship, hastily rising and catching her passionately to his bosom; "have I not offered you every thing but my name? even *that* shall be yours; but first, adored Mary, let me see this picture; let me know if my suspicions are true."

He was proceeding to draw the string from her bosom, when Mary, in wild alarm, called aloud for Violante. The door opened, and sir William Beaufort appeared. Lord D'Eresby, ashamed, let go his hold; and Mary rushed into her bed-room and fastened the door.

"What have you done, my lord?" cried sir William, in a tone of reproach.

"That for which I shall detest myself," replied his lordship, now sobered by the consciousness of his fault; "my passion for Miss Seymour has led me this fatal night to avow it, in a manner which has wounded her delicacy. When you entered, I was on the point of beholding a mi-

niature which she always wears, and which I suspect is that of a lover. Go to her door, sir William, implore her to pardon the rashness of my conduct; say how sincerely I repent it; tell her that my imprudence has already cost me dear, if I have caused her a moment's pain; that I am willing to make her every atonement for my crime; and that I conjure her to accept my hand, my heart is already hers."

He now quitted the chamber for that of sir William's, who, after a pause of a few minutes, tapped gently at her bed-room door, and entreated to speak to her.

"Are you alone, sir William?" On his replying in the affirmative, Mary opened the door, and came forth to meet her adopted brother. Sir William felt the value of this confidence; he took her hand, and led her to a seat; the blush of offended delicacy still tinged her cheeks, and the tear of wounded honour trembled in her eye.

Sir William pressed her hand respectfully to his lips—"Thank you, my dear

friend," said he, "for your readiness to grant my request; it pains me deeply to see you thus agitated; it cuts me to the soul to know that you have received an insult from lord D'Eresby; but, in justice to his lordship, I must own that no man can be more penitent, or more ready to atone for a fault that arose solely from intoxication. He has conjured me to plead for him, to entreat that you will overlook the impropriety of his conduct, and accept, as an atonement, his hand and fortune."

Sir William paused, his voice trembled, and his features betrayed strong agitation of mind—"You are silent, my dear Miss Seymour," he continued; "surely a heart such as yours will not withhold its pardon from lord D'Eresby; he is waiting in my chamber for your reply. Believe me, he is fully sensible of his fault, and anxious to make you all the honourable reparation in his power."

"I thank his lordship for the honour he is now so willing to confer on me," said Mary, blushing deeply; "but I must beg

leave to decline it: since you have had the goodness to become the advocate of lord D'Eresby, I will trouble you, sir William, to inform his lordship, that I readily believe that he would never have forgotten what was due to the friend of his daughter, and to one whom he condescended to solicit would continue his guest, had he not been under the influence of wine. I forgive his lordship the insult I have received, and only request that for the short time that I shall remain under his roof, he will not mention to me the subject of his attachment."

"Is this really your determination then?" said sir William, "and are you aware of the solid advantages which you would derive from an alliance with a nobleman of baron D'Eresby's wealth and power? or is it only the effect of wounded pride? had the event of this evening (an event which his lordship most feelingly deplores) never taken place, you would perhaps have accepted his offered hand."

"No, sir William, my decision would

then have been the same as now; if you please, you are at liberty to tell his lordship the same. I am not insensible either to his lordship's merits, or the great advantages which I should receive in becoming his wife. As a proof that I forgive his recent behaviour, have the goodness to say that I feel too sensible of the hospitable kindness I have met with, ever since I became an inmate of his family, to return it with selfish ingratitude. Circumstances have made it impossible that either lord D'Eresby, or any other man, should ever possess my affections; and I trust that I shall ever remain too honourable to bestow my hand, unless my heart could accompany it."

The cheek of sir William turned pale as death; he remembered the nocturnal visit of Monteith; a sigh of real anguish escaped him, as he remembered also that he was a married man.

"Do you condemn me, sir William, for this resolution?" said Mary, in a plaintive

voice; "I should have thought that *you* at least would have approved my conduct."

"You do me justice, Miss Seymour," replied sir William, gravely; "every man of honour must applaud your generosity; but suffer me to lament that any cause should exist which not only dooms you to a life of celibacy, but——"

"What is it you would say, my dear friend?" said Mary, shuddering with fear; "ah, do not hesitate to keep the fraternal promise which you made; let me know at once the cause of your late coldness, and of your present emotion."

"Promise me then, dearest Mary," said he, pressing her hand in his, "that you will not be offended at what I have to communicate; that you will receive it as from a brother, deeply, fondly interested in your happiness."

"I pledge my word only to remember the *motives* of your communication, be it what it may."

"I am satisfied," replied sir William.

"First, then, my lovely friend, you must not be surprised that your beauty, talents, and situation in life, should raise you many enemies among your own sex. The notice of lord D'Eresby may have increased their number; the voice of calumny has been busy with your name, the shafts of slander and malice have long been aimed at your reputation; I have studied to ward off the blow, but it must fall. Unfortunately, the arrival of little Donald gave grounds for suspicion; it is confidently asserted *here*, that the sweet boy has a still stronger claim to the maternal fondness you bestow on him than that which you acknowledge. Do you forgive me, Mary, or does my candour offend?"

"Go on, sir William, my mind is prepared to hear the worst," said Mary, agitated almost to fainting.

"Appearances have not been wanting to shake the esteem of those *most* warmly

attached to you," continued sir William; "the recent visit of the Highland officers"—Mary started back in wild dismay.

"The strong resemblance which one of them bears to the infant Donald, and, above all, his visit to yourself, which is known only to me, has, shall I confess it? even made *me* suspect the truth of your assertion respecting that child—Ah, Heavens! I have said too much. Mary, my sweet Mary—my sister—my friend! look up, I have been to blame."

Sir William flew to the next room for a glass of water.

"I am better now," said Mary, bursting into tears; "do not be alarmed, sir William, I am inured to pain; I have lived to witness the destruction of all my hopes, to see myself bereft of nearly all that is dear to me, and now I must endure the heavy loss of *your* esteem—a loss I fear irreparable."

"No, Mary; in spite of reason, in spite of myself, you will ever be dear to me;

thus far have I dared to risk your displeasure: the promise I made to our sainted friend, the likeness you bear to my first love, are claims upon my heart which I cannot resist; yet how joyfully, Mary, would I strip myself of every worldly luxury and comfort, could I but be assured that my suspicions were unfounded; would to God that I was deemed worthy of your confidence!"

"Alas! sir William, the proof of my innocence, when known to you, will wound you more deeply than your present suspicions. Before I leave this house, your wishes shall be gratified; let the assurance, however, that our dear Mrs. Chudleigh knew the *whole* of my unhappy history convince you, that as she deemed me *worthy* of her esteem and love, I cannot be wholly undeserving of your friendship."

"I live, I breathe again," cried sir William, with animation. "Whatever may be my private feelings, yet let me do justice to those of lord D'Eresby, who, notwith-

standing the mystery of your situation, and the invidious remarks of his friends, is yet willing to raise you to his own rank in society. Are you still in the same mind, Mary? it is not yet too late to retract?"

"My determination is unalterable."

Sir William now hastened to his lordship, to whom, in the most delicate manner, he communicated the reply of Mary.

"Sweet girl!" exclaimed the baron, "since she has so generously consented to overlook my rashness, I will not despair of gaining at last the possession of her hand."

Mary, who had returned to the drawing-room, felt some embarrassment on the entrance of lord D'Eresby; it increased when, as her brother rose to take leave, she saw him followed by his lordship. After an absence of nearly an hour, they both came back, lord D'Eresby having prevailed on George to sleep there that night. It was now that Mary began to dread the consequences of lord D'Eresby's

attachment; she justly concluded that she had been the subject of their private conference, and feared to encounter the persuasions of her brother, who could not be expected easily to relinquish the hope of seeing her united to so desirable a man.

The next morning, after breakfast, George, whose sanguine hopes were once more raised by the prospect of his sister becoming the wife of lord D'Eresby, impatiently waited to see her rise from table; but Mary, who trembled at the idea of what would be their conversation, continued yet to linger on her seat. Violante asked her to walk, but her father made an excuse to detain her at home; and thus was she compelled reluctantly to retire to her chamber, whither her brother accompanied her.

George immediately began the subject nearest his heart; he represented to her the advantages which would arise from so desirable an union; then appealed to her maternal feelings, by setting forth the be-

nefit which her child would derive from her giving him a father-in-law of such interest and consequence as lord D'Eresby. —"Think, dearest Mary," said he, tenderly, "think that the future fortune, nay, perhaps happiness of your child rests upon your present decision. His lordship, with the noblest generosity, has proposed to settle upon you an annuity, transferable to whom you please. I felt the delicacy of his conduct the more, as I was convinced that he suspected who was the mother of Donald. *My* honour was called upon to confide in *his*; a few words discovered to him who you were, and the truth of his suspicions; his affection was only increased by the disclosure, and he became doubly anxious to raise you to a rank in life which would enable you to do justice to the child whom your fatal confidence has robbed of his birthright. Mary, you know with what ardour I have anticipated such an event as this; you know how my soul has longed to see you exalted to such an es-

tablishment as the one now offered you; my happiness, as well as that of your son, now rests with yourself."

"Alas, alas!" exclaimed Mary, raising her streaming eyes towards heaven, "when will my sorrows end? oh! had not the cry of my infant staid my phrenzied hand, the heart of his mother would not have been exposed to this new misfortune. My brother, why have *you* forced me to regret that the sword of Monteith did not put an end at once to my life and miseries?"

"Mary, Mary! you distract me," replied George, walking hastily up and down the chamber; "I will not for *the present* urge my wishes; but dearly as I love you, Mary, I will not tamely give up the idea of seeing you the wife of lord D'Eresby. Remember, Mary, it is not every man that would thus nobly receive into his family a woman of blasted character."

Angry and mortified, he quitted the apartment, leaving his sister in a state of mind that was calculated to excite pity

more than indignation. The fortunate entrance of Violante gave relief to her feelings; she repeated what had passed between her and George, while Miss D'Eresby hung over her in tender compassion, and kissed away the trickling tears as they fell—"Beloved Mary!" said Violante, embracing her, "dearly as I should like to see you the wife of my father, because I think I should then be secure of your society, yet I am certain that neither his lordship nor myself would purchase our happiness at the expence of one sigh, one tear of thine. Cease then to weep, my lovely friend; the heart of my father is too kind, too good, to add for a moment to your afflictions. Be comforted, my dear Mary, all is for the best; I thought not always so, but the distress I now see you in, a distress partly occasioned by the harshness of Mr. Fitzroy, has convinced me that the gentle and yielding nature of Edgar is more suited to mine than that of your brother. Come, Mary, look up; I am confident that my father, when he

knows the constancy of your heart, will be the last man in the world to increase your sorrows."

Mary, a little comforted by the assurance of Violante, dried her tears, and then confided to her what had been the subject of sir William's conversation—"I shall not be able to speak to him, I fear, upon so painful a topic; but if not, I will write an account of my misfortunes; and you, my Violante, shall give it him on the morning of my departure."

The two friends now agreed to pay a visit to Mrs. Byron, to whom Mary was impatient to relate the cause of her fresh vexation.

When all the family met at dinner, the attentions of lord D'Eresby to Mary were so tender, yet so respectful, that she ventured to raise her eyes towards him in friendly confidence, while those of sir William watched hers in anxious doubt—"My Violante," said lord D'Eresby, "I promised that you and your valuable

friend should not, if possible, be separated. My solicitude for your happiness, and, I may add, my own, has led me to desire that my town-house may be immediately got ready for our reception. Your friend will, therefore, only be in London a few days before yourself. Lady Estifania has kindly consented to accompany us; sir William, I know, is desirous of seeing his sister, lady Victoria Volatile; and Edgar, of course, will not be extremely sorry at the opportunity of presenting to his father his future daughter-in-law."

The heart of Mordaunt throbbed with rapture, that of George felt a momentary stoppage, while the face and bosom of Miss D'Eresby were crimsoned with blushes. This agreeable information seemed to delight all who were present, none more than Violante, who rose from her seat, and flinging her arms round the neck of her father, thanked him for his readiness to oblige her.

"My dearest Violante," said his lordship, "your happiness is dearer to me than

my own; but in this instance little merit is due to me. Miss Seymour has contrived to gain so entirely the heart of father and daughter, that it is no wonder that the idea of her absence should be insupportable to us both."

"And pray, my lord," cried lady Estifania Dorville, "let me also be included with yourself and my niece; Miss Seymour is a great favourite of mine, as well as her cousin. Were I a younger woman, Mr. Fitzroy, this confession would not be quite so proper."

George kissed her hand with vivacity—"Your ladyship does me infinite honour," he replied; "such an avowal is more flattering to my vanity, because I have no reason to doubt its sincerity."

It was impossible for Mary not to feel the delicacy of lord D'Eresby's conduct towards herself; he suffered not the ardour of his passion to escape him otherwise than by his looks, or by a gentle pressure of the hand. He respected the feelings of Mary, he respected the virtue which had

made her resign the man of her choice, and he sincerely sympathized in the painful mystery it had obliged her to adopt; trusting, therefore, to the eloquent pleadings of her brother, and to the friendly sentiments which she had ever evinced for him, lord D'Eresby forbore to urge his suit while Mary remained under his roof—a line of conduct well calculated to increase the esteem she had always bore him.

On the day previous to her departure, Mary took an opportunity of informing sir William that she found herself unequal to the fulfilment of her promise; but that she would leave with Violante a letter, which was to be delivered to him after she had quitted D'Eresby House—"If I have not always acted consistently with your good advice—if I have from infancy suffered my heart, more than my head, to direct my actions, do not withhold from me your friendship; my sufferings have been severe, my punishment has followed my offence."

An indescribable sensation rushed through the frame of sir William; he would have thrown himself at the feet of Mary, but she had flown.

Next morning, by break of day, the travelling carriage of lord D'Eresby, which was to convey them part of the way to London, stopped at the lodgings of Mrs. Byron, who, with Sophy and little Donald, returned to D'Eresby House to breakfast. His lordship was ready to receive them: taking the child in his arms, he kissed him affectionately, as he placed him in those of his blushing mother—"Sweet boy!" said his lordship, "dared I to trust to the wishes of my own heart, this house would be thy future home."

He paused lest he should offend.

The repast concluded, the travellers now took leave with less regret, as their separation was to be a short one. George felt himself agitated, as he took the soft hand of Violante once more in his; he raised it in silence to his lips, then gave it to Mr. Mordaunt, who, no longer dread-

ing him as a rival, cordially offered him his, in token of his friendship.

Lord D'Eresby now conducted Mary to his carriage; the fleetness of the horses soon conveyed the beloved inmates from his sight; a sigh, which he could not restrain, escaped him as he re-entered his magnificent abode. The enchantress of the scene was gone, and it no longer retained to his eyes the same appearance as before.

Sir William flew to receive his promised letter from Violante; he shut himself up in his apartment, nor was he seen again until the dinner-bell warned him that it was time to join the family. It is impossible to paint the astonishment, grief, and dismay of sir William, on discovering that Mary was no other than his little friend, the object of his first and tenderest regard. It required all his self-denial to restrain his impatience to follow her immediately, to beg her forgiveness for his injurious suspicions, and to pour out his whole soul to her whom he had so long and so fondly

esteemed. Reason, however, resumed her empire in the mind of the reflective sir William, and he determined to remain where he was, until the removal of the family.

CHAPTER VI.

MARY had no sooner arrived in London, than George, after seeing her safe to the friendly cottage of Mrs. Sutton, hastened to the house of lady Sarah Fitzroy. He found her ladyship so much recovered as to be able to sit up the chief part of the day, and so desirous of making amends for her uncharitable neglect of his sister, that she requested him to bring her the next day, and commissioned Delia to write and invite Mary to take up her residence altogether with them. Never did the dutiful Delia execute with more real pleasure than the present her mother's

commands; and George, highly delighted by the invitation of his aunt, hastened back to Hampstead to communicate to his sister the pleasing intelligence.

Out of compliment to lady Sarah, Mary put on the chain and cross which her ladyship had given her, and then accompanied her brother to the residence of her aunt. The tender Delia was watching impatiently for the sound of the carriage wheels; she flew with extended arms to bid her welcome; then led her to the chamber of her mother. Lady Sarah received her niece most graciously; she even went so far as to confess that she had acted towards her unjustly, but hoped that she would now allow her the opportunity of making amends for her past neglect. Mary respectfully kissed her hand, assuring her, with great sweetness of voice and manner, that on her part all was forgotten; her ladyship had already made her amends by the flattering kindness of her reception.

"Then I hope, my child," said lady

Sarah, "that, as a proof of it, you will in future make this house your home. Delia will, I know, be happy to have so sweet a companion; for since Sarah married and became a mother, Barbara and Elizabeth pass the chief part of their time with her. Have you heard, George, what the news is?"

Her nephew replied in the negative.

"We are all extremely anxious for the dispatches to arrive," continued her ladyship; "the late events have given us hopes of a peace at last; but the present rumour of a battle has thrown Sarah into the deepest distress, lest her husband should have been again engaged."

The idea of a battle paled the cheek of Mary, who shrunk as she met the quick glance of her brother. The tenderness visible in the dove-like eyes of Delia, in some degree consoled her, as she felt assured that she should not be in want of the sympathy of a friend in the moment of affliction. Before the hour of dinner, Mary retired to Delia's apartments to

change her dress. Here she received the caresses of her cousin, unrestrained by the presence of lady Sarah, and here they enjoyed the luxury of mutual confidence.

Delia informed Mary that her mother had been so pleased by her constant attentions during her illness, that she had allowed her to dismiss lord Bodmyn, who was now actually paying his addresses to her sister Elizabeth; and that lady Sarah had even gone so far as to say that she should have the liberty of choosing for herself; a higher compliment could not have been paid her by lady Sarah Fitzroy.

In the dining-parlour they found Mrs. Mornington and the two Miss Fitzroys, who had just arrived. They all expressed the greatest pleasure at being introduced to the sister of their old playfellow and cousin; yet there was a something in their manners that seemed to lean too much to the hereditary *hauteur* of their mother. Their eyes eagerly ran over the lovely form and fascinating features of Mary; and Elizabeth inquired of Delia, if she did

not think her cousin Mary the very image of the Miss Seymour they had seen with lady Victoria Volatile? Their brother, sir Charles Fitzroy, soon joined them; and Mary, who had formerly felt disgusted by the freedom of his large black eyes, now received the kiss of her fashionable cousin with a grace and elegance of manner, accompanied by the native blush of modesty, that made sir Charles half repent his engagements to his intended bride. The news of the day was now discussed by sir Charles and George; but as yet all was uncertain, and poor Mrs. Mornington was still doomed to suffer the tortures of suspense.

Lady Sarah, who longed to be among her children, for the first time since her illness, now took her tea in the drawing-room; she saw the chain and cross on the bosom of Mary, and calling her to her side, embraced her, testifying the liveliest satisfaction at this proof of her generous nature—"My children," said she, "I see by your looks that you feel, as I do, sin-

cerely happy to see once more among you your early companion, George. We cannot better shew our love for him than by bestowing it on his sister; she seems to deserve the name she bears. I declare I am so comfortable, so pleased, and so much better, that I think I shall be able to dine with you to-morrow. Charles, you must bring Bodmyn and Clifford, with his sister, your wife-elect; I wish to have a family-party. My Delia, both your sisters will have their beaux, what shall we do for you?"

"Oh," cried Elizabeth, gaily, "do not trouble yourself, my dear mother, to provide a partner for Delia; no one can ever suit her taste as well as cousin George, they were certainly cut out for each other."

Delia felt that she looked foolish; her blushes betrayed the state of her heart, while that of George throbbed with sensations not *wholly* new to him, yet certainly at that moment unexpected.

"A match, a match, by Cupid's frolics!"

exclaimed sir Charles, good-naturedly; "the blushes of Delia, and the confusion of George, authorise me to cry a match."

"Dear Charles, be less noisy," said lady Sarah, without, however, any shew of disapprobation; "let me have a little music, Elizabeth; I feel as if it would be of service to me."

The Miss Fitzroys were capital performers both on the harp and piano; but George, who knew that for taste and feeling his sister would at least equal them, said, when they had finished, "Mary, will you not accompany Delia in a duet on the harp? perhaps my aunt would like to hear you."

At the desire of lady Sarah, (who, from motives of delicacy alone, had forbore to ask her niece), Mary now rose to comply. Curiosity was visible on each of the sisters' features, except those of Delia, who, in a voice nearly as sweet as her cousin's, now joined Mary in a celebrated Italian duet. Lady Sarah and her daughters were equally surprised and pleased at the dis-

play of Mary's abilities; and before they separated for the night were perfectly convinced that they should not have to blush for her want of those accomplishments which constitute the woman of fashion.

Lady Sarah, in particular, rejoiced to learn from George the versatility of his sister's talents. Had she been ignorant and uneducated, the odium would have fallen on herself; as it was, her pride felt gratified in owning her for a niece. Before they parted, lady Sarah made Mary promise to be with them next day to dinner, and from that time to continue to reside with her as well as her brother.

When they returned to Hampstead, Mrs. Byron expressed a generous satisfaction at learning the kind reception her favourite had received from one of the proudest women in England—"I must lose you at last, I see, my Mary," said she, endeavouring to repress the maternal tear.

"My more than parent," replied Mary, as she embraced her, "my residence at my aunt's will still leave me my own mis-

tress; I shall see you frequently, I shall still be your adopted daughter; no circumstances can ever create any separation between us, but a temporary one."

"Mary," said her brother, tenderly, "you have the power to shorten at your pleasure this separation from our dear Mrs. Byron. The house of lord D'Eresby will be open to receive you, your child, and this valued friend. A word from you, Mary, will unite us all under one roof."

Mary caught her boy to her bosom; could she have forgotten his father, she felt that, for the sake of his son, she was capable of making the sacrifice of her own wishes.

"For the present," continued George, "I must beg of our mutual friend to continue her maternal care of this child; he cannot be placed any where so happily as here, where every individual seems to idolize him. Should his mother refuse to give him so noble a protector as lord D'Eresby is willing to become, the boy then is mine."

Mary, now anxious to change the subject, mentioned her anxiety to call on Mr. Graham, to whom she was under such infinite obligations.

"We will go there to-morrow," said her brother; "your obligations are mine; I must not fail to express my gratitude to one who has acted so tenderly towards my sister. Besides, I owe him a debt, which, as it is a pecuniary one, thank Heaven! is in my power to repay."

Morning came, and George accompanied his sister to the house of Mrs. Monteith; she had written a few lines to Mr. Graham on the day of her arrival in London, but had received no answer, and she now felt her spirits sink as she saw the windows closely shut. Yet they *might* have removed; at least she *hoped* they had. Malcolm, the faithful servant of Mr. Graham, came to the door of the carriage; he bowed respectfully to Mary—his eyes were full of tears—he let down the step; Mary got out in silent dread; George was about to follow—"Pardon me, sir," said Mal-

colm, "my master can only see this lady."

He then conducted the trembling Mary into a back drawing-room; all was dark, except that a gleam of light through a small opening in the shutter enabled her to discover the woe-worn form of Mr. Graham—"My child!" said he, folding her to his bosom, "alas! I no longer possess any other but you—my Agnes is no more."

His venerable head sunk on the shoulder of Mary; she pressed his cheek in silent anguish; he felt her tears mingle with his own, and his heart seemed lighter at this proof of generous tenderness. He led her to a sofa, and placing himself beside her, said—"Dearest Mary! had you but arrived in town a week sooner, the wish of my poor girl would have been gratified; she longed to see you; her last prayer was for your happiness and that of Monteith."

"Let me at least see her dear remains," cried Mary, in a voice of real sorrow;

"had I but known the wish of Agnes, nothing should have kept me from her."

"You cannot see her, Mary," replied the afflicted father, "already is the lid screwed down; to-day the mortal remains of my amiable, my beloved Agnes, will be consigned to the grave. The departure of Monteith accelerated her death, but God's will be done; it is not for me to murmur at the decrees of Heaven—our separation is merely temporal."

Mary raised his hand to her lips—"I would not leave you, my dear sir," said she, "but that my brother is waiting my return. To-morrow I will see you again; I shall be in town at my aunt Fitzroy's, and will call and breakfast with you: alas! I fear that I shall but ill supply the place of my sainted friend."

"Dear girl!" exclaimed the unhappy father, "dear girl! I thank thee for thy intended kindness, but in three days I set out for Scotland. I could have wished that my Agnes had been buried with her ancestors; but it was her desire to be

placed within the walls of the Abbey. Mary, you know her love for you—you know mine also; but my heart is so full of grief for the loss of my beloved child, that I feel incapable at this moment of conveying to you her last message; to-morrow I may be more composed."

Mary tenderly embraced her worthy friend; she quitted him with extreme reluctance, while the heart of the old man felt solaced by the sympathy which beamed in her affectionate countenance. George heard of the death of Mrs. Monteith with various feelings; the man whom he conceived his deadliest enemy was now free to claim a second time the hand of his sister; this would not, however, legitimize his son, nor restore the before unsullied purity of his mother's fame. Rather than see her the wife of Monteith, he resolved to exert all his influence to persuade her to marry lord D'Eresby, whose arrival he now looked for with double impatience.

On entering the drawing-room at lady

Sarah's, they found Delia alone. She rose immediately to receive her cousins, and taking the hand of Mary, said with joyful exultation, "Welcome, my beloved cousin, to your future home! oh, how happy, how truly happy, your presence makes me! but when am I to see my little favourite?"

"You must ask George, my dearest Delia," replied Mary; "he has robbed me of my darling. Do you remember your promise, Delia? I claim the performance of it now."

"What promise?" said George, hastily, as he stood before them looking intently on the blushing face of his cousin.

"That should any thing rob him of my protection, Delia would become his mother, and you his father."

George pressed the hand of his cousin fervently—"My dear Delia," said he, "your kindness to my sister, at a time when she was under the humiliating necessity, as she conceived it, of going by another name, has sunk deep into my

heart. My pride is gratified by the reception she has met with from my aunt, and the rest of the family; but it is something *more* than the gratification of pride which I now feel on beholding Delia the *friend* of my sister."

At dinner George was introduced to the lords Clifford and Bodmyn, the destined husbands of Barbara and Elizabeth: the sister of the former was the lady to whom sir Charles Fitzroy was going to be married. Again the subject of the supposed news was discussed by the gentlemen—"It is rumoured," said lord Bodmyn, "that we have had a sharp engagement at Orthes; that we have gained the victory, but that many lives are lost, among them some of our bravest officers; the Gazette, I dare say, will be out to-night."

"Heaven preserve my beloved Mornington!" said his wife, with trembling apprehension: "do you know what regiments have been engaged?"

"Not exactly," replied lord Bodmyn,

" but it is said that the —— Highland regiment has suffered most."

Mary turned sick, the paleness of death overspread her features; and Delia, who sat next her, and who too well knew the cause, whispered softly in her ear that she must not give credit to all she heard.

The Gazette arrived. Mary dared not remain to hear it read; she stole to her chamber, followed by the watchful Delia, who, with the most affectionate solicitude, strove to soothe her spirits. At the sound of footsteps the heart of Mary palpitated with such violence as seemed to threaten her existence—" Do not leave me, Delia," said she, in a low voice; " I feel a presentiment of evil."

George entered; he understood the beseeching glance of Delia, and throwing his arms round his sister's fainting form, he kissed her affectionately, saying—" My Mary, I thought you more of a heroine than to run away from the detail of a battle. Colonel Mornington is slightly

wounded, and poor Sarah, who knows what little faith is to be placed in the first hurried accounts of an engagement, is terribly distressed; all are busy in offering her consolation; it will appear singular if you and Delia are absent much longer."

"Are all our friends safe?" inquired Mary, in a faltering accent.

"Friends!" repeated her brother; then softening the tones of his voice, he added, "I have a thousand fears, Mary, on your account; I would not for the universe that you should expose yourself below. Remain here while Delia goes down; in about half-an-hour, all except Sarah will be gone to the opera."

Mary, unable to bear the tortures of suspense, called up sufficient courage to ask if the name of Monteith was in the Gazette.

"It is," replied George; "he has distinguished himself for the gallantry of his conduct during the battle, and is mentioned in terms of the highest praise by his commander, who deeply regrets that

the service is likely to lose an officer of so much talent and bravery."

Mary fell back into the arms of Delia, who still lingered with her friend, and who now sobbed over her lifeless form, in all the anguish of a distress that rendered her incapable of affording her any assistance. With extreme difficulty, George, who was now seriously alarmed, succeeded in recalling his sister to life; Delia pressed her joyfully to her bosom, on which Mary continued to weep for some time, until her brother again entreated his cousin to return to the drawing-room till after the departure of her sisters. Most unwillingly did the gentle Delia obey, promising not to remain a moment longer than was necessary.

"My brother," said Mary, faintly, "I have occasioned you much trouble. Oh that I was now lying by the side of the happy Agnes! I should not trouble you again."

"Beloved Mary! I deserve not this reproach: pardon me, if in the moments of

my zeal for your welfare, I have said or done any thing to wound your feelings. I love you, Mary, dearer than ever brother loved a sister; my hopes of happiness, nay, my very being, depend on you. Bear up against this melancholy intelligence, my Mary; Monteith was already dead to you."

"Ah, Heaven! and is he indeed dead?" exclaimed Mary, in a voice of indescribable horror.

"No, Mary, but I fear mortally wounded."

Mary placed her hand on her heart, as if its pulsation was ceasing. George became terrified at the statue-like appearance of his sister; he clasped her passionately to his bosom—"Mary," said he, "I shall die if you continue thus; it is not in giving way to despair that a noble spirit like yours should shew its attachment. The son of Monteith has now a double claim on the life of his mother: for his sake, Mary, if not for mine, exert yourself once more to rise superior to your misfortunes.

Think that the spirit of Monteith may even now be looking down upon the mother of his child, who thus selfishly resigns herself to unavailing regrets."

Mary raised her head, and casting her eyes towards heaven, exclaimed—"Blest spirit of my adored Monteith, if indeed thou art now hovering in the regions of the happy, and art permitted to hold communication with earthly bodies, oh watch over her who is destined to wander through the world desolate and miserable, uncheered by *thy* voice, unblest by *thy* presence! And thou, oh God of mercy, who gavest to my arms the pledge of Monteith's love, give to his almost exhausted mother strength and fortitude to perform her duties, and to enable her to live for him!"

"Glorious Mary!" cried George, again embracing her; "may thy prayers be heard!"

Delia now returned, and after tenderly kissing the pale cheek of her cousin, told her that she had made an excuse for her to

lady Sarah, and that she need not go down that evening. Poor Mary, as might be expected, suffered most severely from this fatal and unexpected calamity; yet she strove to appear resigned, and even cheerful, next morning when she met her aunt. According to her promise, she breakfasted with Mr. Graham, and it was then that she ventured to give way to her stifled feelings; it was then that the words of comfort reached her ear—"While there is life there is hope."

At the desire of Mr. Graham, Mary, after their melancholy repast was over, accompanied him to Hampstead, that he might take leave of Mrs. Byron, and embrace the dear child of his son-in-law. From the lips of her maternal friend, Mary again received the delightful assurance that she still might allow herself to hope, as there had been sufficient time between the battle and the arrival of the dispatches to have ascertained the death of Monteith. A little more tranquil in her mind, Mary

now returned to lady Sarah's, where her brother and sir William Beaufort were waiting impatiently to conduct her to lord D'Eresby's.

The feelings of sir William could not be checked by the presence of young Fitzroy; he no sooner beheld his first love, his little friend, for whose happiness he had nightly offered up a prayer to Heaven, than falling on one knee before her, and pressing her hand tenderly to his lips, he said—"Thus let me sue for pardon, dearest Mary, thus let me entreat your forgiveness, for ever having doubted the purity of your actions. Oh, you well know with what romantic constancy I have treasured up the remembrance of our early friendship, with what anxiety I have made every inquiry concerning you; and now that I at length have obtained the wish of my soul, I find myself at a loss to express the struggle that is within me. Yet say, dearest Mary, will you once more receive into your friendship a man who,

though too honourable to infringe on the claims of lord D'Eresby, is nevertheless ready to devote himself to your service?"

"Rise, sir William," replied Mary; "if pardon is to be asked, it must be bestowed by yourself; it is *I* that have erred, in not confiding to you before the sad history of my sorrows. My brother, you know not, that when I was a mere girl, chance introduced me to the knowledge of sir William; our acquaintance was short, but to him I am indebted for the best, the most disinterested advice I ever received. Had I followed it, alas! how many heart-aches should I have escaped! my obligation is still the same; and if I am not mistaken, it is greatly enhanced by the generous and secret kindness with which he has conducted himself towards you. Nay, sir William, do not frown on me; you, and you only, are the unknown friend of my brother."

George sprang forward and caught the hand of sir William—"My friend! my benefactor!" exclaimed the youthful hero,

" at length I am permitted to behold the man through whose disinterested goodness I have been raised thus early in life to what I am."

" No more, I beseech you," said sir William, falling on his neck; " all that I have done, and more, you, George, have deserved; I promised your sister, when she was but a child, to patronise her brother; it is the only wish of my heart that fortune has suffered me to realize. But, away with selfish feelings! your hand, Fitzroy; command my interest to the utmost—all that superior wealth has given me is yours; let us mutually strive how best we can secure the peace and happiness of this dear woman; now let us go to lord D'Eresby's. Mary, my sister, my little friend, you will not, in the presence of your brother, withhold from *me*, your *sage adviser*, the privilege of an old acquaintance."

A faint tinge of red coloured the fair cheek of Mary as she felt the pressure of his lips to hers. Sir William trembled;

he held her for a moment in his arms; then recalling his self-command, he gave one hand to her brother, while with the other he conducted her to his carriage, which was in waiting.

The joy of Violante at being again united to her favourite friend was as unbounded as her spirits; while that of her father was damped by the paleness and languor of Mary's looks, which were, however, accounted for by George, as soon as his sister had withdrawn with Miss D'Eresby. Both sir William and his lordship, though each strongly attached to Mary, were too generous to feel any thing like exultation at the probable death of a brave man. Even George seemed to catch from them a portion of pity for the fate of one who, blameable with respect to his conduct towards Mary, was nevertheless an object of sympathy. Had he not been treacherously deceived himself, the character of Monteith would have been unsullied.

CHAPTER VII.

THE warm affection which Miss D'Eresby entertained for Mary would have robbed the gentle Delia of a large portion of her cousin's time, had not lady Sarah, who now appeared as anxious to indulge every wish of her niece as she had before been to avoid her, invited the family of his lordship to her house, even more frequently than some of her own acquaintance. By this means Delia was seldom separated from Mary, as she never failed to accompany her when she spent the day with Violante. It was by seeing the two unknown rivals together, that George became more and more convinced that Delia in reality was the woman best calculated to make him happy as a wife; of her tenderness he had never doubted, and he now

resolved to ask the consent of his aunt to be allowed to regard her as his destined bride.

Lady Sarah smiled on him encouragingly—"Yes, my dear nephew," said her ladyship, "you have my free permission to marry Delia whenever you like: I know of no young man that deserves her so much as yourself; I am pleased at the compliment you have just paid me, because I know you have too much honour to seek the hand of my daughter unauthorised by me."

This circumstance gave general satisfaction to all the friends of George. Delia was happy, happy beyond description. Violante felt a little awkward at first, but the tenderness of Edgar Mordaunt allayed the temporary regret; and Mary, though almost lost to all worldly enjoyments, nevertheless rejoiced at the promised happiness of her brother with the gentle and amiable Delia. Her own situation was far from enviable; though acknowledged as the niece of the proud lady Sarah Fitzroy, though surrounded by relations who

esteemed, and friends who loved her, yet the soul of Mary was cheerless and unblest. Uncertain of the fate of him she adored, ignorant as to his even being in existence, every moment that she could steal from observation was devoted to prayer, and to the contemplation of his heavenly features.

Every thing that affection could devise was sought for by lord D'Eresby to win Mary from her sorrows; with the delicacy of true love, his lordship cautiously avoided hinting at the subject nearest his own heart. Sir William, true to his friend, and alive only to the peace of Mary, concealed within his breast his love, but not his pity. He made every inquiry concerning the wounds of Monteith, but could gain no satisfactory information; yet, doubtless, his family were informed if he still existed, and to them he next applied. The father of Monteith answered the letter of sir William; his mind also was distracted with doubt and fear; he had not heard from his son since his departure.

from England, and felt almost inclined to believe that he was dead. Even Mr. Graham had not heard from him; and sir William, vexed and disappointed forbore to mention to Mary the applications he had thus fruitlessly made.

The change which now took place in the state of public affairs, and the arrival of the long-wished-for blessings of peace, gave Mrs. Mornington hopes of soon embracing her husband. General Volatile, with some of the officers, were on their return; all was hope and expectation, joy and delight; every face but that of Mary beamed with smiles of anticipated rapture; hers alone bespoke a soul dead to the exhilarating scenes around her.

Unable to find eternal excuses for not attending her cousins into public, Mary unwillingly consented to accompany them to a ball, to which the whole family, with that of lord D'Eresby, had been invited. As she had declined dancing, his lordship and sir William either walked with her through the rooms, or sat by her, endea-

vouring to call forth once more the smile of pleasure on her pensive features.

At the sound of her name, uttered in a well-known voice, Mary raised her eyes—"It is, it is herself! my dear, dear Mary!" said a lady, whom Mary immediately knew to be Arabella, the companion of her childhood. "Oh, I am so glad I have found you at last!" cried Mrs. Clinton, seizing her hand, "I have been so miserable on your account."

Mary returned the friendly pressure of Arabella, and they retired to the refreshment-chamber, where, after mutual explanations, and interchanges of affectionate confidence, Arabella led her recovered friend into the card-room, when in an instant they were joined by her husband. The delight of Arabella did not exceed that of Mr. Clinton; his eyes, his voice, his manners, all testified the happiness which this unexpected meeting had occasioned; and Mary, who learnt that her old enemy, the *ci-devant* Mrs. Scorpion, was out of town with her husband, sit

Walter Blenheim, promised to spend the next day with Arabella, who every now and then was obliged to turn aside her head, to wipe away the tear of pleasure, which however was not unmixed with that of pain.

Mary also felt gratified by this reunion with Arabella, whose affection was now beyond all doubt sincere. She introduced Mr. and Mrs. Clinton to George, and then to her cousins, who immediately invited the friends of Mary to visit her at their mother's. The reception Mary met with the next day from Arabella and her husband was such as to render all concealment vain. Mr. Clinton, unable either to restrain his joy at meeting with her after all the searches he had made, or to hide his intimacy with Monteith, repeated to her what had passed between them at Bath, the confidence which Monteith had placed in him, and the agonies of himself and wife, at being unable to discover her residence. "But we have found you at last, my sweet friend," said he, kissing her hands

affectionately; "and nothing I hope will again occur to disunite you and my Arabella."

Mrs. Clinton embraced Mary with tears in her eyes, as she thought of the spiteful, but too prophetic words of her mother—"Let us go to Hampstead this evening, my dear Mary," said she, "and bring back with us Mrs. Byron and your beloved boy; I long to see him. Dear fellow! he will be a nice playmate for my little girls."

The two children of Arabella were now introduced, and Mary bestowed on them those caresses and endearments which are sure to gain the heart of a mother. Mrs. Clinton gazed on them with pride and affection, then on their father, and inwardly prayed to God that she might yet see her lovely, injured friend as happy as herself.

Mary, glad of an opportunity to behold her darling boy, readily consented to the proposal of her former companion; and they therefore proceeded to Hampstead, where the moment Charles Clinton beheld the beautiful features of the disinherited

child of his absent friend, he could not avoid exclaiming, "It is his very image! it is Monteith in miniature."

At the sound of that name every nerve in the frame of Mary vibrated, as she remembered that the adored father of her son was perhaps ere now numbered with the dead. Her spirits forsook her, and she burst into a violent flood of tears as she strained his child to her bosom. The tenderness of her newly-recovered friends, the maternal soothings of Mrs. Byron, at length had power to tranquillize her mind, and she felt some relief by her venerable friend consenting to return with her and pass a week with Mrs. Clinton.

"Hope every thing still, my dear Mary," cried Arabella, as she tenderly embraced the smiling Donald; "as no accounts have been received that Monteith died of his wounds, it is more than probable that he yet lives, and that my Charles will be the first to hear from him."

There is a something in the voice of Hope which no human bosom is able to

reject; and Mary, wretched and almost bereft of hope, yet felt an indescribable sensation pervade her soul at these words of Arabella. She even smiled, on their return, to see the innocent delight which her lovely boy evinced at the sight of his fair and youthful playmates, while the hearts of Clinton and his Arabella thrilled with generous pleasure as they beheld the idol of the unfortunate Monteith and her blooming cherub beneath their roof.

George came in the evening; he was surprised at the unexpected sight of Mrs. Byron and his nephew; a momentary gloom overspread his features, but the friendly warmth by which he was welcomed by Mr. Clinton to his house soon dispersed his ill-humour; and though highly irritated by the treatment his sister had met with from Mrs. Clinton's mother, yet the real affection which Arabella evinced for Mary prevented George from including her in his just displeasure.

When Mary accompanied Arabella and Mrs. Byron to the nursery to see her little

darling put to bed, Clinton, who had been informed of the state of his visitor's feelings with respect to Monteith, felt the anxiety of a friend to bring up his name, and to endeavour to soften down, if possible, the asperity of young Fitzroy.

George himself began the subject by saying—"You will pardon me, Mr. Clinton, but I believe you were a frequent guest at Mrs. Scorpion's while my sister resided there? perhaps you have some knowledge of the man who has so deeply injured her?"

"I have," replied Clinton; "a more unfortunate man, or one more to be pitied, cannot exist. When I first became acquainted with Mrs. Scorpion, the beauty of your sister, but still more that nameless charm that dwells in every look and action, caught my youthful heart, and I became one of her sincere admirers. Monteith appeared, and bore away the prize."

"Yes," exclaimed George, in a burst of passion, "he bore her away to ruin, mi-

sery, and dishonour; but if he still lives ——"

"Be calm, my dear sir," said the good-natured Clinton; "although I am now a husband and a father, and perfectly satisfied with my fate, yet no man can enter more warmly into the cause of your sister than I do; no man would be more ready to avenge her injuries."

George caught his hand, and grasped it firmly—"My friend, my noble friend, you have bound me to you for ever! my sister is dearer to me than all the world; dearer than life or fame: my heart already feels lighter, now that I have found a man to whom I can pour forth all my soul in bitter execrations against this idol of the fair—this woman's darling, whom they have dubbed the handsomest man of the age. Oh, Heavens! that my unhappy sister should have been the fated victim of his treachery—the innocent sacrifice to his villany!"

"Such are the feelings of a brother," replied Clinton, mildly; "of one who *only*

regards the injuries of a lovely and estimable sister, of one whose mind is consequently prejudiced against the cause of them, and therefore unable to judge fairly of the character and principles of Monteith. No man ever loved a woman with more purity of passion, more excess of tenderness, than he did your sister; no man ever deserved more to have his affection returned with the same enthusiasm than Monteith."

"This from *you?*" cried George, hastily; "I thought, my dear sir, that you entered into my disgrace; that you were, in fact, more the *enemy* than the *friend* of captain Monteith."

"I *know* Monteith; I have heard his story, I have witnessed his agonies, and have snatched him myself from the ruin into which he was madly rushing," replied Clinton, with tears in his eyes; "how then can I hate the man to whom existence is a burthen, to whom life became a

heavy load of misery, the moment that he was robbed of his Mary?"

George rose from his seat and paced the room, in evident agitation.

"If I blame him for having married your sister," continued Clinton, "before he had tried the legality of the infamous forced marriage into which he was so shamefully betrayed, I blame him still more for yielding to the virtuous and generous entreaties of his Mary. Never, while I had breath, would I have relinquished my right to such a woman as your sister; no power should have forced me to give her up, after she had once consented to be mine."

Clinton said this with a warmth which brought back George to the chair he had quitted—"If I may give credit to the assertions of my sister," said he, "Monteith is guiltless of *that charge;* it was not *he* who abandoned *her;* it was Mary, who, from a sense of honour and of justice, which did her credit, refused to return to

the arms of a man whom she found was no longer her legal husband."

"True," replied Clinton; "Monteith himself repeated the same to me when I met him at Bath, where he had gone for the recovery of his health: never shall I forget the shock I felt at first meeting with him after his severe loss. Deeply as I sympathized in the sorrows of your sister, yet, by Heavens! my heart bled when I beheld those of the wretched Monteith: he was but the shadow of his former self. 'Clinton,' said he, grasping my hand thus, 'I wish not to live, now that my adored Mary has abandoned me; a false sentiment of honour has divided us; I have complied with *every* request of hers, except one, which was to restore her picture; I feel that I cannot exist without her, and *that* must be buried with me.' Now tell me sincerely, my dear Fitzroy, can I refuse to so desolate, so heart-broken a wretch as Monteith, my pity and my friendship?"

George saw the tears roll down the

cheeks of Clinton; he felt his own eyes moisten, but, ashamed and angry with himself, he turned aside his head.

"I am satisfied," exclaimed the generous friend of Monteith, pressing the hand of George exultingly to his breast, "I am satisfied; the tear of godlike pity which glistens in your eye, my noble Fitzroy, does more honour to your character than all the laurels you have lately won. To forgive an injury, to sympathize even in the afflictions of an enemy, is what I should expect from a soul like yours. A brave man disdains to trample on a fallen foe; but he for whom you have nourished sentiments so uncongenial with your nature is no foe: Monteith is no man's enemy—brave as a lion when occasion demands his courage, he is otherwise as gentle as a lamb; in tenderness of heart, in goodness of disposition, in brilliant talents, and rare accomplishments, few can equal Monteith. Alas! perhaps he no longer lives; yet if he does still exist, how must his soul throb with rapture at the hope of

once more being united to his adored Mary!"

"If he still exists," replied George, "it is by no means certain that the hand of my sister will wait his acceptance. I have set my heart upon her becoming the wife of baron D'Eresby; it is too advantageous an alliance to be rejected, for the sake of a man who could so selfishly sacrifice her peace of mind to gratify his own passions."

"You deceive yourself, my dear Fitzroy," said Clinton; "I know that the just displeasure arising from a nice sense of wounded pride misleads you with regard to your real sentiments respecting my unhappy friend. Were you to see Monteith, your heart would relent, and that arm which has so nobly chastised the haughty insolence of France would never be raised against the bosom of a man whose very miseries would disarm your resentment. Oh, my gallant Fitzroy! let not the generosity of your character, the humanity of your disposition, be clouded by the dark shade of revenge. Heaven has thought

fit to interrupt for a time the happiness of two of its most perfect creatures. The Almighty allowed them to taste in the highest degree the rapture of connubial bliss; then, as if to try the strength of their patience, their resignation, and their religion, he tore them from each other, and made the smiling world to them a desert. The virtues of your sister, the silent agonies of the heart-broken Monteith, his struggles to act with justice to the woman who was forced upon him, first by the treachery of his father, next by the supplications of her he adored, may not have passed unnoticed by the merciful eye of an all-seeing Providence. The soul of the gentle Agnes is once more recalled to its celestial abode; and thus, should the life of Monteith be spared, has the Supreme Director of our destinies once more re-opened the path by which the sufferers may arrive to the summit of their hopes, the attainment of a reward which will compensate for their past dreadful misfortunes. Surely, then, my dear Fitzroy, it

is not *your* voice, it is not *your* arm, that would raise an obstacle to the felicity of your amiable sister; it is not the noble defender of his country's rights, of his country's glorious independence, that would refuse to perform the part of the good Samaritan; and instead of pouring the balm of consolation and pity on the wounds of Monteith, plunge still deeper into his breast the exterminating sword of unchristianlike vengeance."

The entrance of Mrs. Clinton, Mary, and Mrs. Byron, now changed the discourse. The former had, with extreme difficulty, prevailed on the companion of her childhood to receive from her hands the money which the injustice of lady Blenheim had so long withheld, and Mary only accepted it out of compliment to the feelings of Arabella; while George, when informed of the delicate and affectionate manner in which it was given, felt that to decline the intended kindness would be to evince a false pride, and wound the gene-

rous friendship of Mrs. Clinton without cause.

When Mary and her brother returned to lady Sarah's, they found sir William Beaufort waiting for them—"My friend," said he, taking the hand of George, "I wish you joy of being appointed captain to one of the finest frigates in the navy."

George pressed affectionately the hand which held his own—"Your goodness, sir William, overpowers me; I feel myself at a loss to express my gratitude for such steady, such disinterested friendship as yours. Mary, how can I repay even a *part* of my obligations to your early friend?"

"It is a subject on which I entreat your silence," replied sir William; "my happiness is limited; it is confined to the power of promoting yours, and that of my lovely adopted sister. But, George, this new appointment will rob us for a short time of your society; the frigate is under sailing orders to proceed to bring over some of the illustrious personages who are

about to honour this country with their presence."

The cheek of Delia turned pale; George went up to her, and pressing her hand, was about to whisper in her ear, when lady Sarah said—" You shall not be disappointed, George, of your bride. The pleasure we all feel at your preferment shall not be damped by seeing you look discontented. Delia is yours before you leave England; and sir William, who appears your best friend, shall give her away."

George was in raptures at this proof of kind condescension from his aunt; he thanked her over and over again, while Delia, covered with blushes, and trembling with modest pleasure, had neither inclination nor power to oppose the request of him she had loved from childhood, that their union might take place in the course of two days.

" I think I have acted right, sir William; have I not?" said her ladyship; " the blessings of peace prevent the possibility of my nephew's life being in dan-

ger from the voyage, and I think my children will approve of my conduct, though Delia by this means will be married before Bab and Eliza."

Sir William highly applauded the considerate behaviour of lady Sarah, while Mary first embraced Delia, then George, and lastly, kissing the hand of her aunt, she thanked her in terms of the warmest gratitude for the happiness she had thus bestowed on her beloved brother.

The next day Mary, with Delia, accompanied George to dine at lord D'Eresby's; the latter delivered the invitation of his aunt, who requested that his lordship, with lady Estifania Dorville and Miss D'Eresby, would grace his nuptials by their presence. Lord D'Eresby, as well as his sister, congratulated young Fitzroy on his approaching felicity, while the cheek of Violante became red and pale alternately; but she remembered that the mild and amiable temper of Edgar Mordaunt was better suited to her own, than the firm and haughty disposition of George

Fitzroy; and therefore wished Delia joy with more composure of features than Mary had expected.

Lord D'Eresby rang and ordered his carriage—"Violante, my beloved girl," said his lordship, "there is yet time for you to go to Mr. Clinton's. I will take no denial, bring them with you, they are the friends of captain Fitzroy, and must rejoice in his happiness; and if you can find in their house an old lady who deserves to be immortalized, and a dear little boy, who may one day become the object of universal attraction to your own sex, why, I believe you may venture to bring them also."

Violante joyfully obeyed; but Mary and Delia would not allow of her going alone —"I will not have either of you," said she, with an air of captivating vivacity; "this unexpected wedding of yours, my dear Delia, reminds me that I have not yet settled with Edgar about the colour of our carriage, the number of our horses, and a variety of other things preparatory

to the latter—"How, my dear Mary, can you continue to be blind to the silent but eloquent tenderness of lord D'Eresby? how can you withhold from your child so noble a protector?"

Mary bent her head close to the cheek of George; she laid her hand on his breast —"Dearest brother," said she, in a low, sweet voice, while her eyes became humid with tears, "how can *you*, whose heart now beats quick with love and hope, whose countenance beams with the anticipated rapture of mutual tenderness, breathe for me a wish fraught with increasing misery? *could my heart* acknowledge another master, which is impossible, it would not be lord D'Eresby."

George raised his head with inquiring eagerness: all were busily conversing about the sudden and approaching nuptials, and Mary continued—"I see your surprise, my dear brother; it is needless, my affections are not mine to bestow; if they were, gratitude would surely point out to you a man whose claim is still

stronger than even that of the amiable lord D'Eresby; a man who, when I was a mere child, almost uneducated, and cruelly neglected by the ungenerous lady Blenheim, loved me with a noble disinterestedness, which has prompted him to become my steady friend ever since."

Mary now turned from her brother, and taking her seat by Mrs. Byron, endeavoured to forget the conversation which had just passed between her and George. After dinner, when the ladies had retired, lord D'Eresby began to circulate the glass pretty freely, and the entrance of sir William, whom they had expected to dinner, increased their hilarity. The early friend of Mary no sooner beheld the blooming Donald, who was seated on his lordship's knees, than taking the child in his arms, he kissed him with paternal affection, and enticed him to remain with him—"I should have been here to dinner, my lord," said he, "but that I found it impossible to leave my sister. General Volatile is

arrived, and with him colonel Mornington and several other officers: your lordship will, I hope, accept of this excuse. It was with difficulty that I got away, on my promising to return to supper."

"We will drink the general's health," replied his lordship, "as well as those of his brave companions. May their return to their native land ensure to them the sweet reward of beauty's smile and beauty's kiss!"

With all my heart, was the general cry, and the toast was drank with enthusiasm.

"Perhaps, sir William," said Mr. Clinton, "you can relieve my anxiety for the fate of an absent friend—a brave, a gallant officer, who was reported to be mortally wounded."

George changed colour; he cast a look of doubtful inquiry towards his noble host, and then on sir William, who, meeting his eye, replied, as he again pressed the child of Mary to his bosom—"I thank Heaven that I am able to relieve your

fears, Mr. Clinton; and I trust that *all* here will rejoice to hear that your friend the noble Monteith still lives."

George half rose from his chair; but encountering the expressive eyes of sir William, he reseated himself.

"My lord," continued the truly excellent friend of Mary, as he held out his hand, which his lordship immediately took; "my lord! I know your heart, but you have yet to learn mine. Never should you have been acquainted with its secret attachment, its long-cherished affection for Miss Fitzroy, had it not pleased Heaven to spare the life of *him* who alone can render hers valuable. Yes, my dear D'Eresby, I knew Miss Fitzroy when she was only fourteen; I was then engaged to the amiable sister of our dear Mrs. Chudleigh, but my heart was passionately devoted to my little friend. A variety of circumstances continued to keep me in ignorance of her fate. I was introduced to her as Miss Seymour; as such I believed her; as such

I loved her, for her very natural resemblance to my first love. As soon as I discovered the state of *your* affections, honour bade me conceal my own; yet I love her, my lord, with a fervour which cannot be exceeded by your own. The heart of this angelic woman belongs solely to Monteith; for him she has endured, as you well know, the severest agonies, the keenest afflictions; she adores him with all the romantic enthusiasm which he appears to deserve; both have suffered most severely; both love to madness. Monteith lives to claim his bride; Monteith lives to convert the tear of agony into one of bliss, to make the heart of Mary once more throb with rapture and chaste delight, to reward her for all that she has endured. Perish the man whose selfish soul would form a wish to disunite two beings whom love and misery have linked so firmly together!"

Sir William, strongly agitated, passed his hand across his eyes, while the child, half-terrified by the energy of his voice

and manners, stole down from his knee, and crept to the arms of his equally-agitated uncle.

"See," cried the friendly Clinton, trying to clear his voice, "see, Fitzroy, where the sweet innocent comes to claim your protection; look in his angel face, and think you hear him pleading for his imprudent but idolized father; think you hear his infant voice imploring you, by your own hopes of approaching happiness, to bestow it on his parents, to unite those whom treachery alone divided. It is from your lips, my dear Fitzroy, that this child must learn the doom of his tender mother, his penitent father."

George looked still irresolute, yet he clasped the boy to his breast, who put his little arms round his neck, and laid his lovely face close to that of his half-yielding uncle.

Lord D'Eresby, who had been silent from emotions which did him honour, now endeavoured to give utterance to his wishes. His voice, however, like that of

Clinton's, was unsteady; he stopped, as if unwilling that his feelings should perhaps be misconstrued, and filling a bumper of wine, said—"Let us drink to the recovered health of captain Monteith; and may his arrival restore him to the summit of all earthly felicity! I am no longer his rival—no longer the lover of Mary; but, like my noble friend sir William, I will cast aside all personal feelings, and join with him in supplicating the pardon of Monteith. Come, my dear Fitzroy, pledge me; let the past be for ever buried in oblivion; forget every thing that can wound a man of your nice sense of honour, and think only of the felicity which you have now the power of conferring on your sister and the father of your nephew."

George tried to force a smile—"You have set me a generous example, my lord, and I will endeavour to follow it; the peace of my sister is dear to me; so is my own character, my own honour. I cannot, however, resist the kind solicitations of your lordship, and of my disinterested and

once-unknown friend, seconded as they are by the powerful pleadings of Mr. Clinton, and even of this infant. To-morrow puts *me* in possession of the woman I love and esteem; to-morrow determines *my* happiness; let it also revive that of my dear, but too romantic sister. To you, sir William, belongs the right of breaking to Mary the tidings which will give birth to all the tenderness of her nature; I commission you to make use of my name to her, in whatever way will afford her most satisfaction. My absence from England will of course be short; when I return I will try to meet captain Monteith as a brother. My friends, are you satisfied with me?"

There was but one voice, and that was of praise; George felt his bosom lighter as he received the warm approvings of his gratified companions. Another bumper was now drank to the health of captain Fitzroy, and the gentlemen soon after joined the ladies in the drawing-room, where the sight of Mary's sweetly-pensive face, and the certainty of soon beholding

it dimpled with smiles of connubial transport, solaced the rival lovers for the disappointment of their own long-cherished wishes.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the presence of all his cousins and of the family of lord D'Eresby, George received from sir William Beaufort the hand of the amiable Delia. As soon as the ceremony was over, they set out for a country-seat of sir Charles, which was about ten miles from town, where they purposed remaining a couple of days. On the morning of the fourth, George was to take the command of his new frigate.

Lady Sarah, though she had but little time for preparation, had issued cards for a ball in the evening, and expressed a wish that she might see colonel Mornington and the whole of her family, George and

Delia excepted, at her dinner-hour. After partaking of an elegant refreshment the bridal visitors retired; and Mary, whom the event of the morning had made more cheerful than usual, now found herself alone in the drawing-room with sir William, who lingered behind the rest, that he might communicate to her the blissful intelligence that Monteith still lived.

Mary, who had longed, yet feared to make the inquiry of colonel Mornington, first began the conversation—"To-night," said she, "I shall have the pleasure, sir William, of again seeing your sister; how happy, how very happy she must be, now that the general is returned to her in safety!"

"She is of a disposition, thank Heaven, to be happy," replied sir William; "the return of general Volatile will at least be attended with one good, the dismissal of Mrs. Cringewell from the table of my sister. Let me hope, my dear friend, that you will spare to Victoria some portion of

that time which all who love you are anxious to possess. Ah, my sweet Mary! how prophetic were the words I uttered on that evening which will never be erased from my memory! Did I not say that my fate, perhaps your own, depended on the decision of that eventful hour? Dearest Mary, how different would have been your lot, how different my own, had you accepted of the offer I then made you!"

"True, sir William, I should have been spared all the miseries I have since endured; I should have been ignorant of those dreadful agonies which tempted me to raise my impious hand against my life; I should have been ignorant of every suffering that your tenderness could shield me from, but——"

"What, dearest Mary?" said sir William, pressing her hand.

"Had I become your wife, sir William, and chance had conducted Monteith to my presence, what then would have been my feelings? Ah! forgive me, my early friend, my adopted brother, my generous adviser,

forgive the candour which prompts me to hazard offending you. Next to him who alone could give birth to an affection like mine, I esteem and love the kind friend of my childhood; but Monteith no sooner blessed my sight than I found that all my hopes of happiness must rest with him. The events which have, perhaps for ever, divided us, have not weakened my attachment; still does my heart treasure his image with idolatrous fondness; still does my mind dwell with rapture on the months we passed together, when hours seemed as minutes, passed in his dear society. Oh, sir William! to a soul like yours I need not seek to excuse my present emotions; the torturing suspense I have lately suffered, the fear, the dread, the horror, lest I should hear that my boy is fatherless."

"Compose yourself, dearest Mary," said sir William, pressing her hand to his lips, "general Volatile assured me that the wounds of captain Monteith were not

mortal—that he was recovering, and might soon be expected in England."

Mary raised her eyes to Heaven in speechless gratitude, then burst into tears of unexpected rapture. She continued to sob for some time undisturbed by sir William, whose own emotions kept him silent. At length he said, as he dashed away the tear which fell on his cheek—"Yes, Mary, Monteith, the happy, the still enviable Monteith, lives to claim the reward of all that he has suffered, *thy* hand. I communicated this joyful intelligence to your brother last night, in the presence of lord D'Eresby and Mr. Clinton; we all advocated the cause of Monteith; even your child, Mary, flung his arms round the neck of his uncle, and nestling to his bosom, seemed to plead for his father; his silent eloquence was irresistible. Lord D'Eresby, with great nobleness of soul, first gave the health of Monteith; we all pledged him. Mary, my little friend, my still dear adopted sister, your brother com-

missioned me to make use of his name as I should think proper. Look up, my sweet Mary; George is no longer the enemy of Monteith; happiness is once more within your reach."

Mary felt that she was fainting: excess of gratitude to God and of maternal tenderness overpowered her, and she sunk into the friendly arms of sir William, who held her for some minutes, almost incapable himself of affording her any assistance. She recovered, and tears once more relieved her—"Dear sir William!" said she, raising his hand to her lips, "do not be alarmed, I am better; you have seen Monteith, you have heard him converse, can you wonder at my love for him? oh! I have daily, nay hourly, prayed to Heaven to spare his life; my prayers are heard; I shall once more behold him, I shall hear the magic tenderness of his voice, I shall see him clasp his boy with all a parent's pride to his bosom. Oh, my heart, why does it beat so convulsively? why do my limbs refuse to support me? Monteith, the

father of my Donald, the idol of my soul, still lives to bless me with his smiles!"

Mary breathed with difficulty, and sir William feared that she was again fainting; but recovering herself, she asked him to accompany her to Mr. Clinton's, that she might embrace her son, and see her venerable friend, the good Mrs. Byron.

It was now that the heart of Mary once more became light. Free from the horrors of suspense, she gave way to the exquisite feelings of hope and anticipated rapture, and looked and moved another being. The beauty of her countenance was heightened by the internal happiness of her mind; she danced with animated grace, and talked and laughed with all her former gaiety. Lord D'Eresby and sir William beheld the smile of unchecked pleasure dimple her face, and generously forgot their own disappointed hopes in the confirmation of hers.

Sleep, however, forsook the eyes of Mary. How could she spare a moment to repose? did not Monteith still live—

was he not on his return to England, and free to bestow on her that dear, that sacred name she had once possessed? visions of love, of bliss unclouded by a care, floated across her sight; deeply as she had suffered from his loss, yet the consciousness that he existed, and the certainty that his love for her was undiminished, with the probability of her soon being authorised to bestow on him all the affection which had so long engrossed her soul, now seemed to repay her for all the agonies she had for the last two years endured; and when George returned with his bride to take a hasty leave of her family, he could scarce believe that the happy and animated being who pressed her lips to his, in grateful affection, was his late melancholy and dejected sister.

George, turning towards Delia, who hung on his arm with tearful eyes, said, as he kissed away the starting tear—"I only ask, my dear Delia, to be loved with half that fervour, half that idolatrous tender-

ness, with which Mary continues to idolize Monteith."

At length Mr. Clinton received a letter from Monteith, in which he stated that he had been severely wounded, and incapable of writing even to him, whose friendly heart he well knew would rejoice to hear that he still existed. He spoke of the death of his amiable wife with feelings which did him credit, and paid a just tribute to her virtues. Of Mary, the woman of his choice, the sole object of his tenderest affections, he said little, but that little proved his undiminished love. He was on the eve of embarking for England, and his first visit would be paid to the affectionate Clintons.

This joyful intelligence once more revived the harassed spirits of the worthy Mrs. Byron; she embraced again and again her dear adopted child—"Let me but see you once more united to our beloved Monteith, my Mary, and then I shall die contented."

"My happiness would be incomplete,"

replied her grateful favourite, "were you not to live, my dear mother, and be a witness to my felicity; never will we again be separated; Monteith, my heart's dearest treasure, will join with me in rendering the remainder of your days unclouded by a care, and our son shall be brought up to hold sacred the memory of his parent's best friend."

The daily expectation of beholding the return of Monteith made the Clintons request that Mrs. Byron would remain with them until that event took place; to this she gladly consented, and as well as Mary, awaited with impatience his arrival. A few days after Mr. Clinton had received the letter of Monteith, he was speaking of him to Mrs. Byron, when Arabella, who was standing at the window, hastily exclaimed that a post-chaise and four had stopped at their door.

"It is Monteith!" said her husband, and ran down stairs to be the first to welcome his return.

It was indeed Monteith, who, with the assistance of his servant and Mr. Clinton, now got out of the chaise.

"Bring in your master's baggage," said his delighted friend; "he must not seek any other home but mine." Then, conducting him into the parlour, he actually shed tears of joy at beholding once more the man in whose fate he had felt so strong an interest.

Monteith, pale from his late severe illness, and fatigued by the journey, leaned for a few minutes on the shoulder of his faithful friend, who gave him every proof of a sincere and generous attachment, and who cheered his drooping spirits by reminding him that he was now free to claim the hand of the woman he adored—"Rest here until you are sufficiently composed, my dear Monteith, to bear the sight of an old friend of yours, who is now above with Arabella. When you think you have gained courage to embrace the venerable Mrs. Byron, I will introduce you to her."

Monteith's impatience to behold the adopted mother of his Mary made him forget his weakness, and he immediately begged of Clinton to conduct him to her; but his considerate friend preferred calling to Mrs. Clinton, who with her worthy guest was not long in descending to the parlour which contained the beloved invalid. Monteith embraced Mrs. Byron with tears of filial love; he blessed her again and again for her goodness to his Mary; while she, delighted at his return, supported him in her arms, assuring him of her undiminished regard, and entreating him not to exhaust himself too much, lest he should be unable to support his interview with Mary.

"Oh, no, my dear mother," replied Monteith, "the sight of her, so long and so faithfully adored, would recall me to life, were I on the verge of the grave. But where is my Mary? where is my boy? their presence is alone wanting to complete the happiness of my return."

"Your beloved Mary is in town," said

Clinton; "she is at her aunt's, lady Sarah Fitzroy; I will fetch her, but you must promise to tranquillize your present emotions. Dinner is just ready; let me see you eat a wing of a chicken, and drink a glass of wine, before I go for your lovely wife."

At the sound of that name the blood rushed into the pale cheek of Monteith, and his fine eyes sparkled with rapture. Arabella now re-entered with the blooming pledge of his affection; she placed him in the arms of his father, who pressing him fondly to his bosom, tried vainly to repress his paternal feelings, his paternal tears.

"Who are you?" said the sweet child, looking inquisitively in his face; "you are not my uncle George, nor sir William, nor lord D'Eresby, nor any body that I know."

"I am your father, my beloved boy," cried Monteith, straining him still closer to his heart, "your own father, my Donald! will you not love me better than

uncle George, sir William, or lord D'Eresby?"

"I believe I will," said the boy, "but I must ask aunt Mary first."

Clinton, who feared the effect the child might have on the weak nerves of his father, now called off his attention by introducing to him his own little girls, at the sight of whom Donald quitted the arms of his father to caress his pretty play-fellows.

Monteith strove to check the throbbings of his bosom, as he saw his friend rise from the dinner-table to perform his promise—"Call up all your firmness, my dear Monteith," said Clinton, shaking his hand; "in a few moments you will embrace your Mary; for her sake be composed."

He then quitted them, and Mrs. Byron and Arabella each gave an arm to support their wounded friend to the drawing-room, where they prevailed on him to lie down on the sofa until the arrival of his Mary.

When Mr. Clinton arrived at lady Sa-

rah's, he found that Mary and her cousin Delia were gone to spend the day with Violante. He accordingly drove to lord D'Eresby's, in whose drawing-room he found the fair object of his search, and by her side the friendly sir William Beaufort. The countenance of Mr. Clinton was unusually animated; the generous warmth of his feelings would not admit of ceremony; but going up to Mary, he embraced her, saying—"Come with me, my dear friend, your presence is alone wanting to complete the happiness of one who is anxiously waiting at my house to receive the reward of all his past sufferings."

Mary started from her chair, but the universal trembling of her limbs compelled her to reseat herself; she leaned against the shoulder of Delia, while Violante and all present crowded round her, eager to testify their pleasure at the long-wished-for return of the brave Monteith. Lord D'Eresby, gently pushing aside his daughter, pressed the hand of Mary, saying—"Let me, dearest Miss Fitzroy, be the

first to wish you joy upon the confirmation of all your hopes; no one can be more deeply interested in your happiness than I am; let my family be the first to receive the honour of a visit from captain Monteith."

Lady Estifania Dorville next kissed the cheek of Mary—"My dear and excellent young friend," said she, "I know how anxious you must be to behold the beloved partner of your heart; I will not detain you; go, and be assured that lady Estifania participates most sincerely in your approaching felicity, and that she will impatiently wait for the opportunity of welcoming the return of captain Monteith to his native land."

Tears of pleasure ran down the cheeks of Violante and the gentle Delia, while sir William, who had hitherto been silent, now rose, and taking the hand of Mary, said—"Come, my beloved sister, let me conduct you to the carriage; I need not tell you what my heart feels at this moment; your happiness must constitute

mine. Mr. Clinton will convey you to the arms of his friend, while I go to lady Sarah, and make the necessary explanations. At eight this evening I will be with you; it is from my hand that Monteith must receive the wife of his choice."

A few minutes only elapsed before Mary was clasped to the bosom of Monteith. For some time both were silent; excess of love and of gratitude to Heaven deprived them of utterance; at length Mary started from his arms, and looking tenderly in his face, burst into tears, then pressed him passionately to her breast—"Oh, you have suffered, you still suffer, dearest Monteith! but now that the Almighty has mercifully restored you to my tenderness, all my life shall be devoted to your recovery."

"Yes, I have suffered, Mary," replied Monteith, gazing on her with painful fondness; "but I have not suffered singly. Thy heart, my Mary, has bled with mine; yet all that I have endured is light; the transports of this moment repay me for

months of past anguish. Oh, my beloved! Heaven has restored me to thy prayers: I quitted England, with the impious wish that I might never again return. Thy matchless tenderness, thy pure and innocent supplications to the Supreme Being, have been heard: my life was spared for thee, oh most adored! it was *thy* guardian angel who turned aside the ball from the vital parts; it was *thy* guardian angel who watched over me when wounded, and who has now conducted me once more to the heaven of thy presence. And do I again enfold you in my embrace? do I again dare to call you mine? oh, Mary, it is now I feel my weakness!"

He turned pale and appeared fainting. Mrs. Byron, who was with them, and who had been weeping all the time by the side of Monteith, now assisted Mary in recovering him; he soon revived, the soft kiss of Mary, the mingled tears of rapture and pain which fell on his cheek, recalled him to a sense of her distress and of her love.

Mary supported his head on her bosom; her eyes fondly ran over each heavenly feature, now pallid from the effects of his wounds; while Monteith fondly endeavoured to persuade her that he should soon be well, and that the paleness of his looks, and the languor of his appearance, arose solely from weakness and fatigue.

Mr. and Mrs. Clinton now entered with the little Donald, who ran to his pretty aunt, as he was accustomed to call Mary. Monteith took him from her arms—"Sweet boy!" said he, expressively, "it shall be the study of my life to make thee forget the loss of thy birthright. Every year thy mother and myself will appropriate a part of our income towards procuring for thee an independence greater even than that which belongs to thy father; while our united tenderness shall not leave thee, if possible, a wish ungratified."

Then kissing the sweet lips of his smiling son, he placed him on the lap of Mary—"My Donald," he continued,

"you must call this lady, whom you love so dearly, your mother; she is not your pretty aunt, but your pretty mother: let me hear you call her by that sacred name, my beloved boy."

The child obeyed; and Mary, to whom the name of mother (which now for the first time saluted her ears) was indescribably dear, hugged her son in an agony of affection, then made him call Monteith his father, and promise to love him better than uncle George, or lord D'Eresby, or even sir William.

The friendly Clintons could not check their tears, they were so happy, so perfectly delighted at beholding the reunion of the once miserable Monteith, the once miserable Mary; while the venerable Mrs. Byron was almost overcome by the sight of their happiness. Monteith sat between her and his Mary; he held a hand of each, while his boy, placed on the lap of his mother, was watching the countenances of both his parents as they recounted to

each other all that had passed since Monteith left England.

The eyes of Mary seemed rivetted to the face of Monteith; she scarce breathed when he spoke, lest a word should escape her; while he, in describing the events of the battle, tried to soften down as much as possible its horrors on her account. Seeing the moistened eyes of the amiable Clinton, and feeling the form of his Mary tremble against his own—"It is past," said he, tenderly kissing her cheek, "and I am once more restored to *all* I hold dear, and to you, my generous friends, whose kindness will live for ever in my mind. My dear Clinton, your hand, I know your heart; you see me once more in the possession of my adored Mary; you have seen me the most *wretched* of men, you now behold me the *happiest*. My more than mother," he continued, falling on the neck of Mrs. Byron, "my obligations to you can never be repaid. Henceforward one house must contain us. Mary your

daughter, I your son, and our children—all, all will contribute to your comforts; never again will we be divided."

Mrs. Byron returned his embrace—"My favourite, my beloved, my favourite Monteith!" said the old lady, "I am so happy, so grateful to Heaven, that I have lived to see this blissful day. My Mary's sufferings have been great indeed; but she has gone through them nobly, and she is now repaid: did I not tell you, my child, that I knew that the Almighty would turn your misery into bliss? and behold, he has restored to you your husband, your dear and idolized Monteith."

The entrance of sir William Beaufort silenced the venerable Mrs. Byron. Mary instantly rose, and hastened to meet him, and to conduct him to Monteith, whom she had already prepared to receive her adopted brother. Sir William pressed the hand of Monteith as he expressed his joy at seeing him thus providentially rescued from death, and restored to all that could render his existence valuable—

"The purport of my visit," said he, "must excuse my present intrusion. Of course, my lovely friend has informed you of all that has past since your unfortunate separation. Thank God! I am enabled to assure you that her noble brother has yielded to his affection for his sister, and empowered me in his absence to act for him. Judging of *your* feelings, captain Monteith, by my own, I have for some days been in possession of a licence, and have brought with me a friend who now waits to unite you once more to your beloved Mary."

The gratitude of Monteith was extreme. In a moment Clinton was gone, but soon returned with the stranger. Sir William gave to Monteith the hand of Mary; not a look, not a movement, betrayed the lover. Noble and disinterested to the last, he performed the part of a father, and bestowed on the handsomest man of the age the woman whom he himself had loved from a girl, but whose happiness was far more sacred to sir William than his own.

When the stranger had withdrawn, sir William took a hand of Monteith and of his Mary; he pressed them affectionately to his lips as he again united them. Raising his eyes devoutly to heaven, he said—"Oh God! it is thy divine pleasure to unite a second time these amiable beings; grant that the remainder of their lives may be passed in uninterrupted harmony, and that not even the shadow of a misfortune may ever disturb their mutual felicity! Captain Monteith, it is superfluous to wish you joy; once more have you become the husband of my little friend—Heaven cannot bestow a gift so precious as her heart. Dearest Mrs. Monteith, I am commissioned by your aunt to assure you that she is willing, and even anxious, to receive captain Monteith as her nephew; and that she begs that you will make her house your home until you have provided a proper residence. She requested also that Mrs. Byron and the little Donald may bear you company. When may she expect you?"

"To-morrow, sir William," replied Monteith, "I will pay my respects to lady Sarah Fitzroy; to-night my Mary and I wish to remain with our affectionate friends."

Sir William then took leave, and Monteith once more received the warm congratulations of the Clintons and of Mrs. Byron; while Mary's grateful heart relieved itself by bestowing on the absent sir William all the praise he so justly deserved.

The bodily weakness of Monteith, increased by the agitation of his spirits, made it necessary that he should retire early to his chamber, whither Mary, who could not bear to lose sight of him for a moment, accompanied him. Clasped to her bosom, encircled in her arms, Monteith, as he gazed on the chaste tenderness of her lovely features, almost forgot his wounds. Mary at moments seemed to doubt the reality of what had just passed; she heard the silvery sounds of Monteith's idolized voice call her once more by the dear and

sacred name of wife; she saw his fine and eloquent eyes beaming with undiminished affection; and she felt, as she pressed him fondly to her faithful breast, that all her agonies were now more than repaid.

"Dearest Monteith!" she exclaimed, "to-morrow will introduce you to my aunt and cousins, to the gentle Delia, now my sister, who has sympathized in all my distresses, and who already loves you because you are adored by me. To-morrow will also again introduce to you the hospitable lord D'Eresby, and my graceful friend, his beautiful daughter. The society of these dear connexions will be pleasing to us; but my happiness, my Donald, rests solely with you; were we to continue with my aunt, our time would be too much broken into by the kindness of our friends. Let us retire from the fashionable world, let us live in the retirement of the country, let us devote ourselves to each other, to the dear Mrs. Byron, to our son, and let us endeavour

to find out the worthy Hills and my still dear Eliza Gaylove, whom I have appeared to forget, but whom I still love."

Monteith pressed his lips to hers—"Adored Mary! such also is my wish. I have suffered so severely since I have been deprived of your loved society, that I could now very ill afford to waste an hour of my future years. The present happy state of affairs will allow me to resign with honour my commission, and to devote myself entirely to your comfort. The pure and unalloyed happiness which I shall enjoy as *your* husband, my best beloved Mary, reminds me that all painful recollections, all private animosities, should be buried in the tomb of the gentle Agnes. My misguided father already repents of his conduct; my sisters ardently long to be restored to the affection of their estranged brother. My own heart softens towards them, it throbs with pleasure at the idea of once more revisiting the home of my childhood, the land

of my birth. Does my Mary object to the new-formed wish of her Donald?"

"Oh, no!" cried Mary, joyfully, "no, dearest Monteith, let us go to the land of your birth; let us gladden the heart of your father, of your sisters, and of the good Mr. Graham, by our presence. All that belong to *you* must ever be dear to me; and the pure air of your native mountains may be of more service to you, my beloved husband, than the prescriptions of your physician."

"It shall be so, my Mary; but we will await the return of your brother, to whom I am anxious to be introduced; after that we will set out for Scotland. Our inestimable friend, Mrs. Byron, shall go with us."

"And the poor faithful Betty," said Mary, interrupting him; "I must send for her, my Donald, she shall take care of our dear boy."

"Yes, my own darling," continued Monteith, "we will send for the affectionate Betty to attend her little favourite; she shall assist in nursing any future blessings

which the Almighty may send to increase our rapture; I will not fail to reward her for her fidelity to you. Alex also shall partake of our kindness; the poor fellow has been of infinite service to me during my absence from England."

Mary, warned by the increasing languor of Monteith's countenance, now assisted him to the bed which had been prepared for them by the friendly Clintons, and then retired for a few moments to the end of the chamber, where, kneeling, she offered up her grateful thanks to that DIVINE BEING who had thus mercifully put an end to all her miseries, by restoring to her the father of her boy, the idol of her soul, and "the handsomest man of the age."

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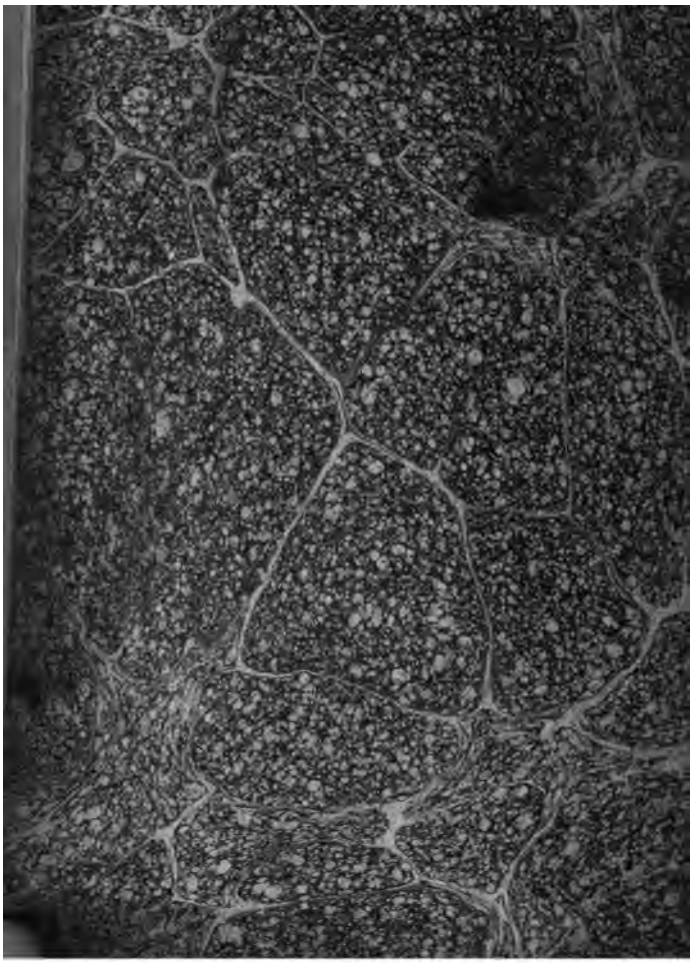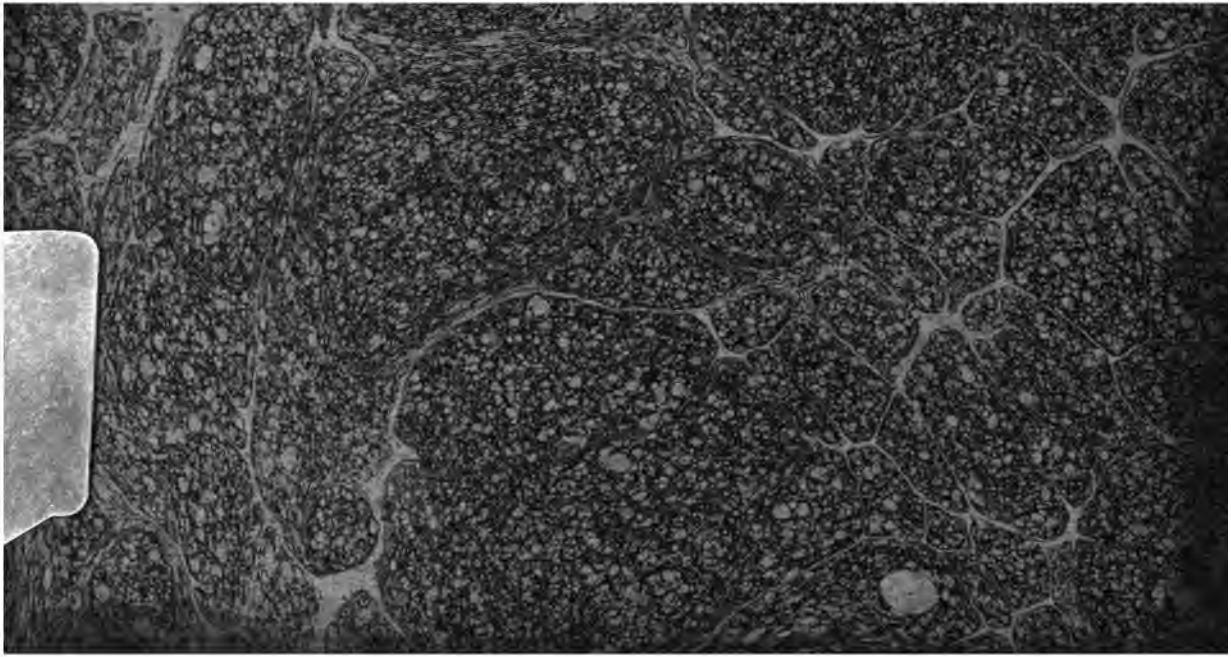
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